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ABSTRACT

This report details one English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher's effort to empower students to become more effective learners during a 10-week teaching experience in Pakistan. The process entailed students' analyzing their own learning styles and strategies, learning new ones, applying them, reflecting on their experiences, and making choices regarding future learning. Using this cycle as a base, the teacher worked toward helping students develop skills that would enable them to assess both themselves as learners and also what they had learned. The teacher followed a similar process in an effort to become a more effective teacher. The report first describes the teacher's personal experiences with teaching leading up to this experiment, then details the 10-week program, and concludes with reflections on the experience. Completed feedback and assessment forms used during the project are appended. (MSE)

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ED 426 616

OLD DOGS CAN LEARN NEW TRICKS (if they choose)
(Student and teacher self-assessment in an EFL classroom in Pakistan)

BY

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTERS OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE AT SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING, BRATTLEBORO, VT.

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Abstract

"Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks (if they choose)" chronicles my efforts to empower students to become more effective learners during a ten-week teaching experience in Islamabad, Pakistan. The process entailed the students' analyzing their learning styles and strategies, learning new ones, applying them, reflecting on the experience, and making choices regarding future learning. Using this cycle as a base, I worked toward helping the students develop self-assessment skills. In an effort to become a more effective teacher I went through a similar process which included exploring the issues of personal competence, self-assessment, and empowerment.

The paper is broken down into three main parts: what lead me to work on the above mentioned issues, a description of the ten-week teaching term, and a reflection/synthesis of all that happened. The appendix includes feedback and self-assessment forms that the students and I completed throughout the term.

ERIC Descriptors

CULTURAL INFLUENCES
EVALUATION METHODS
LEARNING STRATEGIES
PERSONAL AUTONOMY
SELF-EVALUATION (Individuals)
TEACHER RESPONSE
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Empowerment: to me, this is what teaching is all about; helping people to become confident, self-reliant individuals who have the capacity to take responsibility for and control over their learning and their lives.

"Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks (if they choose)" chronicles my efforts to empower students to become more effective learners during the second of two ten-week teaching experiences I had in Islamabad, Pakistan. The process entailed the students' analyzing learning styles and strategies, learning new ones, applying them, reflecting on the experience, and making choices regarding future learning. Using this cycle as a base, I worked toward helping the students develop skills that would enable them to assess both themselves as learners and what they had learned. I went through a similar process in an effort to become a more effective teacher.

Two motivating forces behind this project were the teachings of Paulo Freire and a personal need I recognized during my internship as a student in the MAT program at the School for International Training, to develop a valid self-evaluation system for my students and for myself as a teacher.

Another significant factor was my belief that the classroom can serve as a microcosm of the world outside. A positive learning experience can have a strong influence on students' lives. If students have an increased sense of awareness of themselves and others, begin to take fuller responsibility for their actions, and experience success in the classroom, then they are capable of having similar experiences outside the classroom as well.

PART ONE: ANALYSIS

In an effort to make this paper more accessible, I have labeled its three main parts Analysis, Experience, and Reflection and Synthesis. To organize it as such is more accurate than "introduction," "body," and "conclusion" given the non-linear nature of this particular IPP experience. Consequently the content of each section becomes better defined . The components that follow are:

Part one: Analysis. The goal of my second internship was to help the students and myself as a teacher become more effective in what we do, respectively, in the classroom. The first section of this paper is an analysis of how and why I came to choose that goal. This section also details my preparation for the task and includes a description of the teaching context and the student body.

Part Two: Experience. This section is a week by week description of the teaching term, a sort of blow-by-blow account of the experience.

Part Three: Reflection/Synthesis. This last part of the paper is a reflection in the sense that it is a commentary on my objectives for the teaching experience; did I accomplish what I set out to? It also serves as a place where I synthesize parts one and two—how new understandings of concepts, such as personal competence, evolved from the combination of analysis and experience.

Influential Factors, or "It all started when..."

I sometimes hear teachers say, "It doesn't matter how you teach, students still learn." I recall struggling with this statement myself during the fall Approaches to Teaching Second Languages course at SIT, "Which method is best?" I would ask. Or, "Which works best versus which do I like best as a teacher? Audiolingual? Communicative

Language Learning? The Silent Way?" The answer was complicated by my dislike for ALM as a teaching approach, while of all the language demonstration classes in which I participated, that was the one from which I remembered the most language. I was thus confronted with the question "What do I do if I don't like teaching that way, but it is the most effective way to learn a language?"

My struggle over methodologies came, in part, from my skipping another, more crucial question: What am I teaching? If my answer is "English," then, yes, it is true that motivated students will learn the language whether I use ALM or Suggestepedia (provided that I am equally comfortable and competent in both). But I am not driven only by the desire to make the subjunctive more accessible to the masses. I hope that much more than language learning alone happens in my classroom.

Before starting the MAT program, I knew that I was not motivated to be a language teacher for the sake of language. I had spent two years teaching English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in North Yemen. This, my first opportunity to work, travel, and interact with other cultures proved to be a mind-expanding experience that sparked a desire to continue to work overseas. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching English—it was fun—but I was more intrigued by the cross-cultural aspect of it. It was a mutual learning experience for teacher and students of sharing and exploring cultural values and traditions. This was one of my main motivations to continue as a language teacher.

It would have been quite possible to find a teaching job after my Yemen experience, yet the prospect left me feeling uneasy. I recognized a need for advanced training as an EFL teacher. If I would have accepted a teaching position immediately after my Yemen experience, I would have felt professionally irresponsible and exploitative of my students and my position. I wanted to live and work in a variety of

countries. I was fascinated and excited by the idea of the classroom having implications beyond language learning. But if I were to be an English language teacher, it was imperative that I know my subject. This is not only a matter of self-respect, for I believe language students deserve a competent, confident language teacher. Students and teacher have varying goals and motivations when they enter the classroom. While one of my goals may be to learn about another culture, a student's goal may be to pass the TOEFL. Both are legitimate and must be considered carefully. I feel a commitment to my students to be capable of helping them to achieve their goals. Ideally, the classroom should be capable of meeting both the needs of the students and the teacher.

Fall Semester: The Issue of Personal Competence

So there I was in line to register for the MAT program knowing that I wanted to teach more than language, but feeling a bit disconcerted that I couldn't quite pinpoint what or why I wanted to teach. Throughout the nine-month program however, pieces of the answer gradually began to emerge and provide direction. The Teaching Practices course forced me to answer the same questions again and again: What am I teaching? What are students learning? I began to find common themes in my answers: Confidence. Self-reliance. Responsibility. Of course those answers were always accompanied by specific vocabulary themes or grammatical structures. While the language themes would vary, the others would not.

It was at this time that I became aware of the three types of competence in learning languages identified by Earl Stevick (Stevick 1982). Stevick distinguishes linguistic competence from communicative competence as "knowing what to say" versus "knowing how to say it." For example, if a student answers "Do you have the time?" with "Yes, I do"

and proceeds to walk away, then he/she has answered correctly on a linguistic level but answered incorrectly on a communicative level. The student has failed to realize that the underlying question was "What time is it?"

Stevick's concept of personal competence is not as easily defined or achieved. He makes it more accessible by breaking it down into four levels. At the first level, the student is aware of and can use a number of different techniques in order to learn a new piece of language. Using flash cards is an example of such a technique. At the second level, the student becomes aware of personal preferences regarding techniques: which one works best for the individual and why? A student on the second level is also able to make choices about how to work. On the third level, the student combines the awareness attained at the second level with an ability to modify old techniques and adapt new ones. On the fourth level, which Stevick labels as "the most stubborn and most subtle," The student is challenged to be aware of his/her emotions and reactions when trying to learn. Whereas the first level offers the student a variety of learning techniques to choose from, this last level attempts to offer the student a choice of emotions and reactions. In other words, he/she can choose not to let negative emotions interfere with learning. This fourth level is a very special area of competence that most definitely has implications beyond the classroom.

When I began the Spanish I class at SIT, I was not aware of this concept of personal competence. But now, upon reviewing the experience, I recognize the four levels. On the first level, I had a variety of techniques available for learning vocabulary—using flashcards, labeling items in my dorm with their appropriate Spanish names, creating situations where I could use the new words in conversation with Spanish speakers, drawing action pictures that listed the corresponding verb underneath and posting these pictures

around my desk and bed, and so on. On the second level, I realized that, while all of these techniques were of value, when I really wanted to incorporate a word or words into my vocabulary, I had to use them in context, thus I tried to engage in simple conversations with Spanish speakers. On the third level, I recognized that flashcards and labels gave me a receptive or sight recognition of the word, but to make them more effective learning techniques for me personally, I had to combine them with producing the word(s) orally. I began to modify the techniques by combining them and thereby creating new ones.

There were times when I was quite frustrated by some of our class activities, in particular being forced to repeat sentences that made no sense to me at what seemed to be a ridiculously rapid rate. I remember trying to fight the urge to simply shut off. I now see this as an illustration of the fourth level of competence—recognizing frustration or a negative emotion and trying not to let it interfere with my learning. At the time, my personal strategy was to recall Elvis Costello's words of wisdom, "I used to be disgusted, but now I try to be amused" (Costello 1977). In retrospect, I recognize the importance of exploring such feelings more thoroughly, to find the root of the frustrations and to formulate means of addressing them. If I were to offer a summary definition of personal competence, it would be to call it a well-informed awareness by a student of his/her personal learning process coupled with the skills that enable him/her to control or to be in command of that learning process. This is learning not by accident but through awareness and conscious decision-making.

By the end of the fall semester at SIT, it became evident that I was channelling much of my teaching into the area of personal competence even though I did not have the understanding of it that I do now. I was finally able to answer the question "What am I teaching?" So I packed my bags and prepared myself for my first teaching adventure in

Pakistan.

Winter Internship: The Area of Self-Assessment

Entering my winter internship, though I was happy to have identified the area of personal competence as an important aspect of my teaching, I wasn't very clear on how to incorporate it into a semester-length course. For the moment, I left it simmering on the back burner.

One objective that I did set for that first internship was to work on feedback, both giving and receiving it. In the past I had always cringed at the "f" word. "Feedback" meant "judgement." During the fall semester at SIT, I had recognized the tremendous value of feedback and knew it was an area in which I was weak. I had to work to get over that negative connotation so that I could effectively use feedback to improve my teaching.

I made a tremendous amount of progress in working with feedback after Laurie Emel, my supervisor shared the following Stevick quote with me. "It seems to be the evaluative climate, more than the content of the evaluation, that does the damage" (Stevick 1980). Laurie added, "i.e., dependence on teacher—looking to someone else for verification."

Laurie shared this quote with me while giving me feedback on my teaching. Nervous during my first classroom observation I had mindlessly filled silence with "yup," "good," "OK," and Laurie had noticed this. Upon reviewing my notes from our discussion, I caught myself reacting instead of responding. My gut reaction to Laurie's comments was to rationalize my actions. I had reverted to a self-preservation mode.

It was at this time that I realized that I was caught in the same trap from which I was trying to free my students; I was looking to my supervisor for verification, instead of

examining aspects of my teaching for myself and matching them against my assumptions, not someone else's. From that experience I gained a new-found desire to work in the area of self-assessment, for both teacher and students.

Feedback is an important tool in teaching and learning because it increases awareness. Having strong self-assessment skills increases the value of feedback because it can strip feedback of its potential judgemental qualities. This is because the person receiving the feedback is confident enough in his/her abilities, so that feedback, or an outside source, is not defining his/her capabilities, but merely raising issues to address. Being able to do accurate self-assessment allows the individual, teacher or student, to get the most from feedback.

Self-assessment and personal competence are related, as both involve awareness of individual learning processes and strategies. The second level of personal competence poses the questions "Which language learning technique does the individual work best with, and why?" Self-assessment skills enable students to answer these questions and proceed to the third and fourth levels of personal competence. In studying Spanish, I reached a point where I said "Hey, I'm not learning this way. Flashcards aren't enough." Self-assessment was inherent to that level of personal competence. Hence self-assessment skills are essential to personal competence.

Spring Semester: Empowerment

While in Pakistan, I read Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. From reading his works and discussing his philosophies with colleagues I began to articulate WHY I wanted to teach.

The core of Freire's philosophy is empowerment. He often uses the term

conscientizaco, which Dobbs translates as "the process by which people are encouraged to analyze their reality to become more aware of the constrainsts on their lives and to take action to transform their situation" (Dobbs April 1982). According to Freire, a teacher should "invite students to believe that they have knowledge," that they are capable of creating change (Freire 1988).

Freire's ideas regarding education had a profound effect on me, especially in the wake of an incident I experienced in Islamabad. There, an angry mob of demonstrators attacked the American Center to protest Salman Rushdie's book *Satanic Verses,* which had been recently published in the United States. (It had been published eighteen months earlier in the UK.) Eight people were killed, and over 100 were injured.

Given that Pakistan's illiteracy rate is close to 75%, Freire's indictment of the educated exploiting the uneducated was illustrated in ugly fashion. At the time of the incident, newly-elected prime minister Benazir Bhutto, the only female leader of a Muslim country in modern times, was in China. The demonstration was led by her fiercest opponents, a group of staunch Muslim fundamentalists. Some of my students and the country's newspapers immediately expressed their opinions that the entire ordeal was politically motivated. Knowing that people had been killed for something they had no access to, and given the strong possibility that people and their emotions had been exploited for political purposes, I was provoked to research Freire's ideas more thoroughly.

During the spring semester, I was involved with a Paulo Freire study group that was organized by several other MAT students. These weekly discussions on various aspects and implications of Friere's philosophies were inspirational. It was through these conversations that I began to fully realize the power and the potential of the

classroom—that a learning experience can really touch a person's life, that it can have a postive effect on his/her life. I finally had identified WHY I wanted to teach.

Freire is often associated with political activism, rebellion, radicalism. Or his ideas are dismissed as being unrealistic, unattainable; wonderful, almost mystical goals that lie beyond the average teacher's grasp. To me, Freire's philosophy is the experiential learning cycle taken out of the classroom and applied to real life situations: action that results from experience and reflection. I feel that Stevick's concept of personal competence makes Freire accessible and practicable. I see Stevick's four levels as the road to Freire's goal of empowerment. At the very least, Stevick and Freire have empowered me as a teacher; through reading and discussing their ideas and principles I have been able to articulate my goals and motivations as a teacher.

Overview of The Nine Months at SIT

Three areas of great significance to me surfaced during my three semesters at SIT. In the fall I discovered personal competence, in the winter I identified self-assessment, and in the spring I was consumed by the concept of empowerment.

I wish I had a great way to sum up the three, or organize them in a nifty image such as "empowerment is the destination and self-assessment and personal competence are the vehicle and the road." But I can't. They are too intertwined. It's easy to speak of each separately as theory, but when they are going, when they are happening, developing, they each help to define the other. Personal competence is a type of empowerment and self-assessment is a crucial part of personal competence.

I decided to explore and experiment with these three areas in my second teaching experience in Pakistan.

At the center, the teaching experience was and this paper is an exploration of personal competence, self-assessment, and empowerment in my learning of teaching and my students learning of language.

As my students were working on self-assessment skills, so was I as a teacher. These two experiences were interwoven and interactive in such a way that it would difficult, artificial, and even counterproductive to separate them into different chapters. So there is a dual track to this paper, one being the students' experience and the other being the teacher's experience, yet both are discussed together.

Preparation for the Task

"Preparation" doesn't seem to be an appropriate word choice for what I was doing before the second internship began. I didn't feel like I was preparing myself. Questions were not getting answered, but new ones kept surfacing. I didn't have a list of items that I could attend to easily and check off as I made my way down the list.

What pre-task work I did involved reading numerous IPPs that addressed the areas of assessment, feedback, group dynamics, and learning styles. I discussed questions and issues with fellow MAT students. I read and re-read all my response papers, class notes, and teaching journals, searching for recurring issues in my devlopment as a teacher; an intense cycle of reflecting, journal writing, and discussing ensued. There was a seemingly daily routine of addressing those ubiquitous questions: "What am I teaching? Why? Where is it leading?" I began analyzing my teaching by reading through my lesson plans from Teaching Practices and my first internship. From there, I listed what I perceived were my strengths as a teacher and what areas required attention. I developed a list of teaching objectives for my second term in Pakistan. Once again: "What am I teaching? What are

they learning? Who am I as teacher?" I emerged from that cycle of internal reflection and initiated more discussions with friends and colleagues. Hearing myself gave me more direction and focus as it forced me to clarify my thoughts in order to make them accessible to others.

Naturally, an affective cycle was in motion along with the cognitive activity. I made the complete rounds from doubt and anxiety to confidence and optimism. Chain-smoking and pleas for divine intervention also had varying levels of prominence thoughout my preparation mode for the teaching experience on which this paper, this IPP is based.

The Teaching Context

As I was returning to the place of my winter internship, I had the luxury of knowing fully the teaching context I was about to enter.

The Center for Intensive English Language Studies (CIELS), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is located in Islamabad, Pakistan. The students who attend CIELS have been selected to receive advanced training in their respective professional fields in the United States. First, however, they must achieve the required TOEFL score that corresponds to their level of training (500 for a non-degree program up to one year, 530 for a masters degree, and 550 for a doctorate). The students are expected to reach their goals in a ten-week session. Therefore, they already possess at least an intermediate level of competence in English. They are nominated for the program by their government departments: agriculture, education, health, etc. A significant number of them are university lecturers, while other professions range from accountant to zoologist. Ages run from 22 to 47, with the majority being in their 30's. Less than 2% are women.

There are approximately fifteen students in each class. The school day is broken down into four ninety-minute classes: grammar, reading, writing, and listening/speaking. At times, the students must be reminded that achieving their TOEFL scores is only one of the goals at CIELS. The program also focuses on the study skills necessary for graduate level work and on cross-cultural awareness of such issues as male/female roles, status, and expectations of life in the U.S.

Cultural Background

My observations regarding Pakistani culture that follow are based on my first experience in Islamabad and the initial weeks of my second internship.

Traditionally, Pakistani students learn according to rote memorization, or what Freire calls the "banking method" of education: the teacher possesses a "bank" of information and merely transfers or "deposits" that information into the students' heads (Freire 1988). The teacher lectures, the students take copious notes. Lots of paper, lots of learning.

Thus, the first couple of weeks of both my terms were a bit frustrating for me as I met with a good deal of resistance from the students because I was teaching in a way that shifted the center away from the teacher to the students "Students don't know anything," the students told me a number of times. "The teacher should give us rules and exercises." I had to keep reminding myself of the students' cultural and educational backgrounds. In order to be able to meet them where they were, I had to have a better understanding of where they had been, or where they were coming from. I also had to be more patient. I soon realized that my expectations for the students' ability to shift to a student-centered classroom were great given the time period.

In an effort to make the process a bit easier, I examined the students' situation more closely. To some extent I found some interesting parallels between the basic principles of Islam and a typical Pakistani view of education. I realize that what follows may seem a bit exaggerated and self-serving, but they helped me to be more patient with my students and their initial resistance to a student-centered classroom.

Pakistan is a conservative Islamic country. "Islam" literally translates as "the submission of the will to God" or Allah, who is omniscient. A "muslim" is one "who submits to God's will." The Koran and the Hadith, teachings based on the prophet Mohammed's life, compose the Muslim's complete set of rules and guidelines for living. These works contain laws encompassing all aspects of life: marriage, business, education, government, and so on. There is no perceived need for or room for negotiation.

In the classroom, the teacher is all-knowing, and the lesson plan contains everything. Students submit to the teacher's knowledge and authority. The teacher knows what must be learned, and the students merely follow his/her guidance. (My writing class students interpreted my question "What are the elements of a good story?" as "The teacher must not know her subject. Why else would she be asking us?")

The concept of having choices and making personal decisions is also a cultural issue, as many major decisions are not made by the individual concerned. In Pakistani society it is not unusual for the family to choose the child's field of study, which ultimately decides the child's profession. I asked one student how he came to be a geologist, and he replied "While I was away one weekend, my father enrolled me in the geology college." I asked why the father had chosen that particular field. "Well, my brothers were already in computers, biology and accounting. We needed a geologist." Most Pakistanis have their spouses chosen for them, as arranged marriages are still very

prevalent throughout the country. The students cannot even apply to attend CIELS themselves—they must be nominated by a supervisor. Thus, making choices regarding personal preferances is not part of Pakistani culture.

Keeping all these cultural factors in mind, when a conservative Muslim male of 45, married with six children is confronted by a twenty-seven-year-old single female teacher who doesn't give lectures and wants the *students* to *decide* what *they* want to study, it's culture clash to the maximum. Given the focus of my paper (self-assessment, personal competence, and empowerment) cross-cultural awareness was definitely a significant factor throughout the term.

PART TWO: THE EXPERIENCE

My foremost goal during my second internship was to empower my students by helping them become more effective learners. They would develop skill that would enable them to accurately assess their learning. They would be weaned off the teacher's grade book and develop inner criteria for their learning.

Before the term began I had envisioned myself designing a syllabus for teaching self-assessment skills. I had hoped to have a neat little guided-tour-type package all set and ready for the eager participants, my students, to follow. For example, week one would entail everyone adapting quickly to a student-centered classroom, and the concepts of feedback and reflection in learning. From there, we would move on to the "What did you learn this week?" questions, which students would complete each of the ten weeks. By the end of week two the students would be ready to successfully deal with self-assessment sheets, rating their understanding of various structures in class and formulating strategies to increase their understanding of those structures. I foresaw myself with a binder full of forms that I would hand out to the students as the term progressed.

It soon became evident, however, that that was not a feasible or appropriate course of action. (A realization I should have made earlier, especially given the fact that I have never been one for guided tour packages.) I was too new to this area. I knew what I wanted to do, but I wasn't quite sure how to make it happen. It was also quite presumptuous of me not to consider fully the essential role that the students' backgrounds and individual personalitites would play in the design of things.

So while I did have some set objectives (e.g., help students develop self-assessment skills) their implementation had to based on the students. The beginning steps of analyzing learning styles and strategies took longer than I had anticipated. Time was

required for the students to adjust to the idea of a student-centered classroom. It was crucial that I not lose their trust in me as a teacher, which is what I felt would have happened if I had forced the transition on them too quickly. So, because learning takes time, we spent the first half of the term discussing strategies, establishing trust in one another, learning how to communicate with one another, and making the shift to a new approach to learning.

At times, the process seemed to drag on, and I wondered if we would ever get to the self-assessment stage. But by the third week of the term I had rediscovered personal competence. Much of what we were doing in class, particularly the work with analyzing learning styles and strategies, was working on personal competence. Suddenly, it had leaped to the front burner. At one point, I thought this IPP would develop into "Empowerment through Personal Competence." I even spent several days channelling the paper in that direction. I soon realized, however, that personal competence was too intangible, the boundaries between levels too subtle, and it was all too new to me for me to use as a basis for an IPP. I still did not have a clear understanding of how to incorporate it in a syllabus or semester design. Empowerment through personal competence did play a significant role in my teaching though, and it was interesting to see how it kept re-surfacing at various stages of the term.

Keeping in mind that my goal was to help students become more effective learners and not to march them through a rigid course design, I saw the term naturally break itself into two parts. The first half focused on laying a foundation, exploring the first three levels of personal competence, whereas the second half focused on building self-evaluation skills.

Overview of the Term

Week 1: student-teacher introductions
overview of goals of grammar course
T and ss discuss responsibilities and roles
ss complete "description of self as learner" forms

Week 2: negotiate syllabus
discuss goal of becoming independent, self-reliant learners
ss rate the week's activities according to value and enjoyment

Week 3: have feedback session
distribute learning strategy sheet
ss rate activities
distribute dialogue journals

Week 4: collect strategy sheets, compile data, and distribute results to ss

Week 5: suggest new learning strategies
present pyramid illustration—presentation/controlled practice/free practice
discuss learning a language—which came first, the rules or the language?—encourage ss to use new structures
distribute self-evaluation forms for mid-term conferences

Week 6: mid-term conferences
mid-term TOEFL

Week 7: critical incident, break-down of trust
try to re-establish rapport in classroom

Week 8: assign more individual tasks (inductive learning activities)
pep-talk and confidence building activities
distribute self-assessment forms (include "What did you learn this week?")

Week 9: continue to assign more individual tasks
provide ss opportunities to try new strategies for learning
distribute self-assessment forms

Week 10: ss reflect on individual learning strategies from week 9
provide more opportunities for ss to use their strategies

Week 11: distribute final evaluations—self/course/teacher

Week One

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:*
- *get to know students*
- *introduce idea of various ways of learning*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *discuss responsibilities of T and ss*
- *complete "description of self as learner" form*

Journal entry from July 17: "Tomorrow is day one, grammar—feel OK but a bit nervous—important to start out right. Focus on rapport and objectives." This was my starting point: establishing the right mood. This was my second term teaching at CIELS. I recalled the students' initial greetings from my first day in the Pakistani classroom. "Have you ever taught before?" "What are your qualifications?" "You are very young for a teacher." "What is your area of specialization?" I knew I would be facing a similarly inquiring group. Thus, our first day of class focused on making introductions, asking and answering questions, providing an overview of objectives and expectations—both those of the students and of the teacher.

After the introductions, the students formed small groups and were asked to list the responsibilities of the students and those of the teacher. A class poster was than posted with all the listings for us to reflect on and discuss. The responsibilities listed included: (for the students) punctual, attentive, motivated, complete assignments, cooperative, and obedient; (for the teacher) knowledgeable in subject area, able to reach all types of students, receptive to students' questions, good evaluator, and God-fearing.

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* When I wrote my objectives each week, I did not consciously separate teacher performance objectives from student performance objectives. It was only in writing this paper that I labeled the objectives as such, in the interest of clarity for the reader. You will discover, however, that some weeks list only teacher objectives, others only student objectives.

I then shared my view of my role as teacher. I like to use the analogy of teacher as traffic cop—one who can direct or misdirect, but who is not the driver and therefore not in ultimate control of destination, speed, etc. I also told the students that I respected their intelligence and would not give them any answers that they already knew. "I am not the only source of information. There is a great wealth of knowledge in this room. You are all highly qualified professionals with advanced educational backgrounds."

The student comment that the teacher should "be able to reach all types of students" lent itself nicely to my next step. One of the goals of the the term was to explore different learning styles. We reviewed the various ways that people learn—visually, orally, aurally, and experientially. I noted that not only would the students be learning grammar, but they would also be learning new ways to learn. The class seemed to realize the importance of having a variety of learning techniques if everyone was to be reached.

After this discussion, with an emphasis on being open to new ways of approaching learning and thinking and the importance of flexibility, we played the game of "Molly and Ned" (Reynolds, Kopelke, and Durden 1984). The object of the game is to guess what the rules are. Students can ask the teacher as many questions as they like, the only stipulation being that they are yes/no questions. Quite simply, the rules are that the teacher will answer "yes" to any question that has its last word beginning with the letters a-m, and "no" if the last word begins with n-z. (For example, "Is it played inside? " is answered "yes" because of the "i" from "inside." The fun starts when the answers contradict each other. "Are we playing the *g*ame?" "Yes." "Are we playing the game, *n*ow?" "No.") The class was divided into three teams, with each member having an opportunity to ask a question.

The class needed some guiding, but they eventually figured it out. It was great to see the range of expressions on their faces, from frustration and disbelief to surprise, amusement, and "whoa, that was pretty neat." The first class period ended as the solution was reached. I felt very positive about our first meeting.

For homework, I gave the students a form asking them to describe themselves as learners (see appendix, form 1, page 68). The objective was to increase their awareness—the first step in becoming more effective learners. I thought our class discussion, supplemented by "Molly & Ned," would provide the students with an experience to use as a reference if needed.

Week Two

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *be more patient—especially in writing class*
- *with patience—meet the students where they are, and be empathic with their frustrations*
- *encourage students security in me as teacher*
- *be sure everyone understands directions*
- *in writing class, let the students write—stop talking about it*

My second meeting with the students was the first day of week two. Whereas my first meeting with the class felt great, the second was a bit different as we moved from the theoretical plane of learning to a real, vivid learning experience. In discussion we had agreed, but practice was another thing.

About mid-way through class I asked the students to go over their grammar homework. The students were seated in one large circle. Each student was given a card that read AGREE on one side and TRY AGAIN on the other. After giving an answer, if the student was shown TRY AGAIN cards, he had to explain his answer. If he felt he was correct, the student(s) who disagreed did the explaining. Initially, this activity usually

proves to be fairly chaotic, with students insisting that I step in and say right or wrong. I stayed out of the activity, however, both verbally and physically as I positioned my chair outside the students' circle. The cards helped the students keep some semblance of order.

"Excuse me. How will we know if we are correct?" "The teacher is the authority." "*She* must give us the answers. We are only students." These are a few of the comments I heard students utter eventhough there was not one instance where no one knew the answer. While I removed myself from the exercise I did not abandon the students. If they were way off base on something I would offer a few hints to get them back on track. At one point, when several answers had been offered for one question, the students pleaded with me to intercede. My response was "I've heard the answer three times." The students looked at each other and started asking who said what and discussing each possibility.

When the students interepreted the first name of American humorist Will Rogers as the modal "will," I drew their attention to the sentence structure so that they were able to recognize the confusion.

The students were uncomfortable with this process and a bit doubtful of its usefulness. I felt it was an important step in making the shift to a student-centered classroom and giving them more responsibility, while also recognizing their existing knowledge of the language. I also told the class that it was an exercise in learning to work together as a group, in cooperating with each other.

The students seemed relieved when I came back into the circle as they finished the last question. Little did they know what lay ahead: the negotiated syllabus. I handed the students a list of twenty grammar points from gerunds and infinitives to articles, along with a separate sheet that defined each point and listed several examples. For homework, I asked the students to check off the items they were most interested in studying during

the term, the items on which they would like to place the most emphasis. They didn't ask any questions; I was sure the task would be clear once they had had the chance to read it over.

The next morning at about nine o'clock (ninety minutes before class) I was at my desk reviewing lesson plans when I felt my chair rocking. I turned around thinking someone must be moving it but found no one. The rocking continued and I noticed the coffee in my mug swishing as if we were on a pitching boat. My first earthquake and it measured 5.7 on the Richter scale. It was not until later that afternoon that I realized the omen I had been sent.

I saved the last twenty minutes of our third class day to discuss the syllabus. When I initiated the discussion I was confronted with a mini-rebellion. "We don't know anything." "We must learn everything on the list." "What if we pick the wrong things?" "You are the teacher. You know what we must learn." I could understand the students' feelings, but I was getting a bit overwhelmed by the stream of comments. I felt like I was giving reassuring responses, but they were just not listening. "How are we to know what a gerund is?" I showed them where the definition was, pointed out the examples and cited a few more. Not two minutes later another student said, "We don't know what these things are. What is a gerund?"

I was getting frustrated. I felt the students were not trying to understand. They were capable of reading and processing the information. I told them that there wasn't time in the term to cover every item in detail. They would contribute information, I would contribute information, and the syllabus would be formed through a combined effort. Obviously they knew a great deal of English or we would not have been able to have had that conversation.

I put them in small groups and let them discuss the list of items, thinking that this would help them to process and focus. Still they insisted that they could not do it. And almost every student checked off every item, thereby conveying to me that not only could they not do it, but they also would not do it. It was impossible for me to design a syllabus from the information they gave me.

I was frustrated to no end, and after class I stormed about the teachers' room in quite a huff. After lunch I had an equally frustrating encounter with my writing class. More ranting and raving ensued.

After my disconcerting day at work, I sat down with my teaching journal and began that oh-so-necessary reflecting time. I was mad at my students. They didn't appreciate all my efforts—for them! I was saying "Hey, your opinion matters here. You know yourself better than I do. I'm giving you the opportunity to take control of your learning. I'm empowering you guys!" UGHHHH!—what ingrates!

After allowing myself the time I needed to react and blow off steam, I made a few realizations. I thought of the earthquake as an omen for the rocking that my assumptions and motivations regarding learning had taken that day. But wait, who was rocking who? I had expected my students to conform to my way of teaching within a few short days. I was asking them to completely abandon their identities as students, to leave behind who they had been for eighteen years or more! "I said many beautiful things, but made no impact. This was because I used my frame of reference, not theirs." (Freire 1981)

It was at this time that I drew the parallels between Islam, Pakistani culture, and the Pakistani view of education that I mentioned in the cultural background section. I also took a closer look at the teacher objectives I had set for myself prior to the term. Being

more patient in the classroom was foremost. I knew I had better start actively working in that area. I posted "RESPOND, DON'T REACT" notes in a variety of visible places.

It was time to regroup. I started the next class day reassuring the students. I unravelled a poster I had made the night before and discussed its contents. It listed the other goal of the course:

> "Help students become independent, self-reliant learners who take responsibility for their learning. This process requires confidence building activities, trusting in yourself and your classmates. It also means having choices and making decisions. A rewarding process that takes time. Be patient."

Although this message was as much a reminder for me as for the students, the class seemed relieved, reassured. They also seemed to have a better understanding of what I meant by responsibility and making choices.

I distributed clean copies of the syllabus items. I told the students that they could only check ten items each. The ten most popular items would be the ones we covered in detail. The others would be mini-lessons or out of class assignments. I then shared with the class a more positive omen that I had recently received.

The previous day, an article appeared in the *Pakistan Times* outlining a speech made by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in which she stressed the importance of self-reliance in developing countries. "It [self-reliance] reduces dependence on others and enables one to stand on his feet. [It also] implies striving and hard work to fulfill one's own need" (*Pakistan Times,* 24 July 89). I distributed a copy to each student and suggested that he post it over his desk at home "for inspiration." A copy was also posted in the classroom. Great stuff. Classroom as a microcosm.

The following day I collected the "description of self as learner" forms. (I had intended to collect them sooner, but it took the students a few days to complete them.)

The results I received were mixed. Some students had left several items blank. There also seemed to be a bit of confusion regarding the "strengths/weaknesses" questions. I was looking for answers such as "highly motivated, good concentration," etc. Many answers, however, pinpointed weaknesses regarding specific grammar points, e.g., modals, passive voice. I told the students that we would refer back to their responses at the middle and end of the term to see if anything had changed. Given that the form was probably the first of its kind for these students, I was generally pleased with the responses. Some of the class obviously had put some time and thought into their responses. Not only was the form a novelty, but many of the students had not been in a classroom in fifteen to twenty years. Perhaps they were too far removed from a learning experience.

At the time I wasn't quite sure how to improve the form or better guide students so they would be better able to provide more complete answers. I had thought of filling one out for myself and posting it in the classroom, but was concerned that the students might mimic my answers. Perhaps I preferred that the students' answers weren't particularly insightful; their progress would seem all the more dramatic at the end of the term. In the future I will use a form with more focused questions (see appendix, form 1b, page 70).

On the final day of the second week I distributed a form that asked students to rate the week's activities for both value and enjoyment (see appendix, form 2, page 71). The idea for this was taken from a similar form that Bonnie Mennell had used in an International Students of English class at SIT. The rating was numerical, one being extremely low and five being extremely high. At the bottom of the page students were asked to comment on which activities were the most/least helpful and why.

This proved to be a good source of feedback for me. The number system made it easier for these students to give the teacher comments. Giving the teacher feedback was a

foreign concept and this system made it less threatening for them.

It was during this second week that I realized that the process of analyzing learning styles and strategies would take longer than I had originally anticipated. I would be unable to set rigid time limits. I would have to feel the students out, let their feelings and responses determine the pace. I was also a bit concerned with overwhelming the students with all of these forms and questions. Was I overdoing it?

Meanwhile, on the Teacher's Process...

As I stated in the introductory chapter, I not only sought to help my students become more effective learners, but I also sought to help myself become a more effective teacher. The process I went through was similar to that of the students in that both included cycles of analysis, reflection, and action. Week two brought forth the realization, however, that we were at different starting points. I came to the task with an understanding and acceptance of the goals and approaches. I did not bring the doubt due to unfamiliarity that my students naturally brought with them.

Though we were at different points, our processes interacted in a dynamic manner. In some ways it was like a game of Scrabble: we both had our own pieces and tasks, but our movements equally influenced and were influenced by the other. Choices could be made whether to continue working on something originally planned, or to play off of the other player's move.

My system of teacher evaluation was also altered. It was not feasible to have colleagues observe me in the classroom as I had originally planned. Due to a variety of reasons, CIELS was short-staffed for teachers. Occasionally classes had to be juggled while some of the part-time teachers were conducting cross-cultural pre-departure

orientation programs for participants ready to leave for the States. In the end this proved to be beneficial as it necessitated that I make more detailed observations of myself and my teaching.

At the beginning of each week I listed my objectives for the week—what areas I wanted to work on, such as being more patient or seeking out the quieter students (see appendix, form 9, page 100). Next to these objectives I listed my strategies for working toward them. What exactly would I do to be more patient? How specifically would I try to connect with the quieter students? During the week I would jot down reactions, feelings. These notes were made in a separate teaching journal and did not follow any pre-designed format. At the end of the week I would evaluate my progress (see appendix, form 10, page 104). I was very honest, though I tried to keep my critical self in check by seeking out the positive aspects first.

This system proved to be a great source of empowerment. I began to develop skills that enabled me to be a nonjudgemental observer of my own teaching. I was realistic enough to allow objectives to carry over to the next week(s) if necessary. And indeed some things, especially patience, I would work on throughout the term.

I also left space on the forms for comments I might make later, in retrospect, knowing that my cycle of processing information and arriving at new insights takes time. I might be too close or involved with something to fully recognize all the factors involved.

In addition to my own observations, I kept a list of student feedback (see appendix, form 11, page 104) and how I responded to it. For me, it seems that having things in writing motivates me to be more accountable. It inspires action. How many times can you walk past a crooked picture?

Week Three

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *continue to work on patience*
- *have feedback sessions*
- *work on synthesizing material in grammar*
- *initiate dialogue journals*

We had accomplished a great deal during the second week. Personalities had started to emerge, the course was gaining direction, the class started to gel.

On the second day of week three we had our first structured feedback session. We had had seven days of classes, and the students knew how I was conducting class; they had an idea of how I was working as a teacher. It was time for me to get some oral feedback from them.

The format was that everyone had to say something that he liked about class and then could offer a suggestion, comment, concern. As part of my efforts to work on my patience and on responding rather than reacting, I just gave understanding responses and wrote down what each student had to say. Their statements included: wall charts are helpful...group discussions are good...playing games is fun...teaching should be systematic...the last part of the class should be for review...the topic should be explained first and then we proceed. That night I read the comments and grouped the common concerns and carefully thought out my responses.

The multiple requests that I teach systematically intrigued me. What did they mean? I did have a system. I gave homework on structures that would be presented the following day, my reasoning being that this would serve as a pre-test for the students, thereby allowing them to identify specific areas or points that required attention. The following class was spent on that structure, follow-up homework was assigned, and a ten-

minute quiz was given the next day.

The idea of sharing my system with the students was exciting—a meeting at the crossroads. Teacher and students would each be given an opportunity to discuss where they were coming from.

At our next class meeting we spent the first ten to fifteen minutes discussing the feedback and what I could and would act on. I felt it important that the students know that while I valued their input, I would not implement it blindly. In response to my system, the students said they would prefer that I not give homework on a particular topic until we had first covered it in class. They then clarified what they meant by "systematic." The core text for the course was Betty Azar's *Understanding and Using English Grammar.* The students wanted to begin on page one and proceed through the book "systematically." There was a feeling that I was teaching haphazardly; I was jumping around the book too much.

Again I was excited by the prospect of sharing the ins and outs of my teaching with the students. I took out my copy of our class syllabus. I explained my logic in sequencing the topics, demonstrating how one built upon or naturally led into another. There was most definitely a sense of progression. Next, I dashed to the book room and grabbed several different grammar texts off of the shelf. Allowing the students to see that the table of contents vary from text to text enabled them to realize that there was no universal sequencing of structures in learning English grammar.

That discussion, I felt, was one of the most valuable ones we had as a class, a productive session that yielded mutual understandings. The students valued the session also, as it received high marks, for the most part, on the week's rating of activities.

Another student concern that I had already identified for myself as teacher was

synthesizing the material covered in each day's lesson. I knew this was an area desperately in need of attention, yet too often I would find myself with no time left in the period to review the main points presented. I made a more conscious effort not to plan too many activities for class: I attached large "SYNTHESIZE" notes on my daily attendance sheets. I also sought help from the students, asking them to remind me toward the end of each class to stop and review the past eighty minutes.

The last day of week three, in addition to the rating of activities forms, I distributed a notebook to each student to be used as a dialogue journal. By the look on their faces I could tell this was a bizarre concept for these students. Though the idea also seemed to spark their curiosity. I, too, was new to this idea. I had no preconceptions of what might result. I emphasized that the journal would be a conversation in writing; a student could ask me a question, I'd answer it and then ask him a question. Ideally, a conversation reflecting equal participation would evolve. I had decided against my orginal plan of collecting the journals three days a week. Instead, participation was entirely voluntary. I was curious to see who would choose to do what.

The journals proved to have a significant influence on my feelings and thoughts throughout the term and I will periodically site relevant incidents.

I was working on my ability to see students as individuals, trying not to lump them as one entity. The journals were a great help in that area. The student profile folder I kept was another valuable resource. The weekend between weeks three and four I spent an afternoon compiling the profiles. For each student I listed his responses from the "Description of Self as Learner" form, the ratings of class activities—pinpointing which activities he found most/least helpful—and the comments he gave during our feedback session. My intention was to compile or organize a student's thoughts and share them with

him at the middle and end of the term. To me, this was a way of increasing students' awareness of themselves in the classroom and increasing my awareness of them as individuals.

Overall, week three generated many positive feelings. I felt good about what I was working on and my relationship with the students.

Week Four

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *connect with students as individuals*
- *synthesize material*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *get students to help each other*

I was feeling very positive about the grammar class dynamics. I wondered though, if the students were having too much fun. They were such a pleasant group, and their personalities really complemented each other nicely. While I was seeking to recognize individuals, I was letting the students see me as an individual as well. For the first time in my teaching career I felt that I was bringing more of myself into the classroom. From my self-assessment notes: "With the issues of patience, responding, and the work in the dialogue journals, I see that I am working on becoming a more humanistic teacher—establishing a different type of rapport with students. I am more attached, individualistic, and caring." I invited them to my house for tea. We were connecting as people, not just students and teacher.

In an effort to get the students more involved and in touch with their learning processes, I asked them each to complete a learning strategy sheet (see appendix, form 3,

page 72). This was based on a form that I had experimented with during my first teaching experience in Pakistan. I had since revised it slightly, but the core remained very much the same. The goal was to analyze the dynamics of the classroom; how were the students operating as individuals and how were their actions effecting their classmates? In other words, what were they doing that was beneficial to their learning, and what were they doing that was hindering their learning? Also, what was the best way to learn grammar?

Always floating in the back of my mind was the concern of overkill of awareness. Stevick, when describing personal competence, warns "... but for God's sake don't beat it to death!" (Stevick 1982). With this in mind, I added one last section to the form, "What is your reaction to all these questions and forms about learning? Are they helpful? Too much work?"

After collecting the completed forms, I compiled a master that listed all the responses for each item, names withheld (see appendix, form 3b, page 75). Each student then received a copy. Both times that I have used this form have yielded some exciting responses. Although during the first week of class a homework check activity met with considerable resistance because of a perceived lack of teacher participation, the majority of students listed discussion with classmates as something that helped them to learn. The collective responses also provided a good starting point for trying new strategies. They gave the students fifteen opinions on the best way to learn grammar. We would discuss these and explore other options.

Again, for my self-assessment, I felt week four had gone well. I recognized that I was still weak in synthesizing my lessons, but I was making progress. My patience was also showing signs of improvement. From my self-assessment record: "Feel good about connecting with grammar class. Dialogue journals are a great way to reach out and

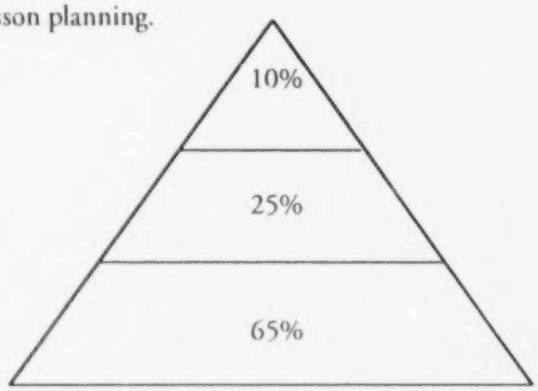
establish interest. I know the class as people more than in my other classes—it makes such a difference. Also, my greatest asset at the moment is how much I care about what happens in my classroom. But it can also be a detriment when I hold on to it too tightly."

Week Five

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *get grammar class USING the language*
- *encourage quieter students to participate more orally*

During the fifth week we discussed how people learn a language. Pakistanis have a propensity for rule rigidness. On the learning strategy form, almost every student had listed controlled-type exercises as the best way to learn grammar. No one had suggested using the language. I asked the students how they had learned their first language. I also posed the question of which came first, the rules or the language. As their answers made clear, in theory, the students realized the importance of actively employing the grammar being studied, but I knew the actual practice of this strategy would be easier "said" than done.

On the board I drew the pyramid diagram that Pat Moran had used with us in Teaching Practices to aid our lesson planning.



Once again my purpose was to increase the students' awareness of their learning processes.

My thinking was that if they were able to recognize which phase of the lesson we were in, their learning would be better facilitated and efficient. I gave the students examples of activities from each area. I encouraged them to increase their free practice time by employing new structures in their writing and listening/speaking classes.

At the end of week five I gave the students their mid-term course and self-evaluation forms (see appendix, form 4, page 79). These gave the students an opportunity to voice in writing any comments, concerns, or suggestions they had regarding the class. It was also time for them to assess their understanding of the material covered in class thus far. Numerous quizzes, homework checks, and a practice TOEFL provided them with an adequate amount of information on which to base their evaluations. The following week we would have individual student-teacher conferences. The form was a solid starting point for conversation. I scheduled the conferences so that the students would complete the forms before they received the results of their mid-term TOEFLs. I was concerned that the students might rely too heavily on their scores, an outside source, for their assessment.

Comments on the week's objectives from my self-assessment log: "Still must work more on reaching quieter students, insuring that they don't feel neglected, but not forcing them into uncomfortable roles. Grammar activities were more communicative oriented. Students used gerunds and infinitives to write travel guides for the five provinces in Pakistan e.g., 'If you plan to visit Gilgit, I recommend bringing lots of warm clothing'" (based on idea from Laurie Emel).

Week Six

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *push students a bit harder*
- *give and receive feedback*

• *don't forget to synthesize*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
• *continue work using the language*
• *do more discovery/inductive learning activities*

The students' pre-occupation with the mid-term TOEFL made for an erratic week. The entire cycle of pre-test anxiety, test experience, post-test winddown, waiting for the results, getting the results, and accepting them deprived students of the ability to focus on anything else.

Though I was fully aware of the students' mindset, I did not want to surrender the week to the TOEFL. I constantly sought to keep the TOEFL in perspective, depriving it of its Judgement Day status with my students. In short, I was determined to get the students working on modals.

Things worked out quite nicely as activities for modals of advice, suggestion, and necessity lent themselves nicely to TOEFL jitters. I posted sheets of newsprint with the words SUGGESTION, ADVICE, and NECESSITY, respectively, around the room. Students wandered from sheet to sheet and wrote such sentences as "You should get a good night's rest before the test." "You must have a #2 pencil." These sentences led to an interesting discussion on differences between suggestions and advice and necessity.

The mid-term conferences went extremely well. They allowed us to check in with each other and share observations and insights. Typically, I would start the conversation by asking for the student's general feelings about his progress in class; how did he think he was doing? Then we would go over his self-evaluation form, with my asking for clarification and/or elaboration as necessary. I then showed the student all his quiz scores and some observations I had made about him in the first five weeks of class (see appendix, form 5, page 86). The tone was relaxed enough so that the student felt comfortable questioning any of my remarks. Next, I gave the student his "Description as Learner" form

and the learning strategy sheet he had completed in the beginning weeks of the term. I would ask a few specific questions about his responses. Did he still feel weak in a particular area? Did he feel the activities that he most enjoyed corresponded with his responses to what he needs in order to learn? Depending on the student, I made suggestions for trying some new strategies or techniques. Then the student had the opportunity to give me feedback on my teaching. I encouraged suggestions for future activities and presentation techniques.

Such conferences are invaluable; students and teacher can really connect, share and just dialogue. My students seemed surprised to be recognized as individuals. I didn't have the same conversation fifteen times; the format was the same, but the conversation always varied. For the most part, the students were amazed at some of the observations I had made about them. I received a number of "Whoa-ho-you-are-very-observant!" type responses.

The TOEFL results were distributed at the end of the week. I had mixed feelings as to the scores; they were too impressive. The students did very well on the grammar section. Immediately I had a new-found respect as a grammar teacher. The class was certain I would receive a promotion or some sort of bonus. I told them that the scores reflected *their* efforts, not mine. Besides, the entire school did well, not just this class in particular.

Comments in my self-assessment journal for that week involved my other two classes. I had been having an uneasy time in my writing class, as a result of a combination of a few dominant, resistant students and my insecurity with the subject. Improving their writing skills was not a priority for most of the class, which adversely affected their motivation. As long as I did not ask them to write, the students were happy, the minute I

did, they fought tooth and nail. Consequently, there was not a pleasant atmosphere in the room. Week after week I sought to alter it. The interaction in that class consistently pinpointed my weakness in the area of patience and my tendency to have the last word. (My sense of humor is usually an asset in class, but my quick tongue can have negative effects as well, as it did here.)

I had a conference with one student whom I felt was a negative influence in the class. It was a sad encounter, as he was unable to recognize his own behavior. I try to keep detailed observations of students' behavior in order to avoid being judgemental. This particular student repeatedly denied not completing class assignments. When I showed him his blank work sheets, he said I should have reminded him to work on them. When I then pointed out that I had in fact handed several assignments back to him, requesting they be completed and returned, he again saw his incomplete work as my fault. I did not feel good about this situation. I was confronting an area needing attention, but wasn't making any progress. I learned to relax a bit and not take full responsibility for the class dynamics, but still was not happy with the situation.

Week Seven

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *get students back on track—post-TOEFL regrouping*
- *be aware of too much dependence on teacher*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *continue work with inductive activities*

I tried to be more careful about giving students answers too quickly. I wondered if I liked my grammar students too much. I really enjoyed teaching them, and I found myself wanting to do things for them. So while I felt extremely positive about the

teacher-students dynamics, I tried not to let them interfere with the learning, or more importantly, allow them to hinder the students' progress in becoming more self-reliant.

The dialogue journals were going quite well. The entries were so stimulating. There were some wonderful cultural exchanges. My idealistic tendencies were being fired up. Intelligent, rational conversations on religion, culture, work ethics, the undercurrent of emotions in Pakistani society, marriage, divorce, and destiny were some of the topics that were discussed. I was feeling so strong as a teacher; I was taking risks and exploring new territory and it was paying off. I was more firm than ever in my belief that a positive learning experience in the classroom can really make an impact on a person's life. So much more than language was being learned on both sides. I was on such a high.

A critical incident brought that magic carpet crashing to the ground. In one of the other grammar classes, a teacher presented an exercise on the past perfect tense. The content centered on leaders of the ancient world, e.g., Julius Ceasar, Cleopatra, Alexander the Great, and Charlemagne. The prophet Mohammed was also mentioned. The students were extremely upset over the material; one in particular was in physical pain. The problem stemmed from listing Mohammed among secular figures.

After discussing the situation with the director of CIELS and the teacher, the class realized that the teacher had no idea that the material was offensive to Muslims. She had not intended to offend them. Still, the students were deeply upset and they were dismissed for the remainder of the day. It was agreed that the class would leave the building quietly and not upset the other students unnecessarily.

Unfortunately that did not come to pass. As those students were leaving the building, they let just enough information slip out to their fellow students to ensure difficulties for those students and the entire CIELS staff. Hearing only that the prophet

had been insulted, and some gross exagerrations of the situation, all of the other students walked out of classes.

Some of the student reactions are still incomprehensible to me, as a Westerner. Several loud voices insisted that the teacher intentionally offended Islam, despite our protestations to the contrary. Some insisted that the incident be taken to the press so that all of Pakistan would know of the crimes being perpetrated at the Institute. (Having been on a bus stopped by angry demonstrators during the Salman Rushdie protest six months earlier, a protest which resulted in a number of deaths and injuries, some of us knew the possible repercussions of such a move.) Several other teachers and I were surroundered by fifty-plus students and their angry voices. "Of course it was intentional." "We can kill for this!" It was like holding on to a live wire, an electrifying shock that rendered me unable to speak or move. I think most of the students did not experience these violent reactions, but their silence gave the impression that they agreed. Besides, it is virtually impossible to voice disagreement when Islam is the topic.

Immediately after the incident the students convened at the hotel where most of them were housed to discuss their plan of action. One student called our office to report that someone had said, "The teacher should be killed."

A number of meetings were held between student representatives and CIELS administrators and representatives of USAID. The students presented a list of their demands: 1)—all offensive material be destroyed; 2)—a letter be written to the publisher of the text from which the exercise was presented; 3)—an apology be issued; and 4)—the teacher be dismissed. All but the last were met.

As can be imagined, the incident had quite an impact on the trust and rapport in the classroom.

Months have passed since this incident, yet I continue to process and analyze the situation. There are still many questions left to answer. Hurt, anger, shock, and frustration were my initial reactions. I have never known an institution with more hard-working and caring teachers. Their attitudes and actions reflected these elements. And because of this high investment of emotions and energy, it was incomprehensible to me that the most vocal gut reaction was that the incident was a pre-meditated, intentional offense. It saddened me to think that people could think that way.

I must confess to a certain amount of cultural insensitivity, initially, on my part. Those few loud voices, even though they were a minority, clouded my thinking, and I made some gross generalizations about Pakistanis and Muslims. I had to regroup and recall the work I was doing in trying to recognize individuals and not assign a single identity to a large group of people. What can I say? I was totally humbled.

We returned to class three days later. The staff had decided that touchy issues were to be avoided in the classroom. I was outraged by this decision. Avoiding thought-provoking issues went against my definition of teaching. As in the past, I identified with Freire: "Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality, or under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion" (Freire 1987). I was beside myself. I could not conceive of teaching in such a sterile manner.

Week Eight

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
• *get grammar class back on track*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
• *start the self-evaluation process*

Who I was as a teacher had been affected by the events of the past week. I was not

incapicitated, however. Having written objectives helped me to focus and get back on track. Actually, I was surprised how healthy our rapport in grammar class seemed once classes resumed. I had hoped to accomplish more work in the area of self-evaluation and trying new learning strategies during week seven, but it would have been inappropriate as well as impractical.

On the surface, classes seemed to continue as they had before the incident. In some ways I was relieved, but in others I was a bit disconcerted. A feeling of oh-nothing-has-happened-can't-we-just-forget-it-and-move-on pervaded. How cheap, I thought. Must we brush everything under that carpet? Why can't we explore what happened? Thinking that a rational conversation involving religion was highly unlikely, I avoided the topic. My inability to resolve my thoughts and questions on the issue left me feeling off-balance, however.

For week eight I aimed to get the students doing more tasks individually, to get them relying on themselves as individuals. They might have perceived this as a bit unfair. For the majority of the term pair and group work had been emphasized. Now that they were not only accustomed to it but also enjoying it, I was jerking them around again.

My goal of helping students to become more independent learners guided my actions. It was time to get the students moving in the area of self-reliance and developing their self-assessment skills.

Throughout the term the students had proven to be successful at formulating rules and identifying patterns through observations of the language. They had accomplished this with tag questions, modals, pronoun forms, and other structures. Now I was asking them to do it with adjective clauses. In the past, they had worked in small or large groups. This time, however I challenged their individual capabilities. Panic ensued when I

distributed "discovery sheets" on reducing adjective clauses to adjective phrases. Several students insisted that they were unable to handle the task. I assured them that they completed similar activities successfully throughout the term, but resistance, grunting, and moaning persisted. I was determined not to cave in to their requests that we do it as a group. I told them that we would go over it as a class the following day. I then collected the sheets. I wanted a sense of who was doing what; who was actively challenging himself and who was waiting things out.

The lack of confidence that had pervaded the class necessitated a confidence-building response on my part. I typed up new discovery sheets. I gathered together the posters that listed observations and rules that the students had generated throughout the term. At our next class meeting, I told them I recognized their frustration with the previous day's activity, and once again I reassured them that they had done this in the past. I presented the charts they had made for the classroom. I acknowledged their ability to work together as a class. While this was a positive element in our classroom, I explained that it was important that a few students not be responsible for all the work. They must challenge themselves as individuals and not rely on others. We had moved away from teacher dependence, but classmate dependence was equally undesirable.

During this pep-talk I shared my rationale with them. The session would be finished in a mere three weeks. It would be months, possibly a year, before they would actually leave for the States. They would continue to study on their own, continuing their work on the language and/or preparing for the Graduate Record Exam. It was essential, then, that they be able to work independently and be able to accurately evaluate their learning. I assessed the class as a healthy and productive one. The panic had been dispersed. People seemed relieved.

I was very conscious of what seemed to be a late start in the students' self-assessment work, afterall it was week eight of a ten-week term. But at the same time I did not have any real regrets or feelings of mismanaging the sequence or timings of class activities. From my teaching journal, September 7th: "It will be interesting to see how the IPP turns out. In some ways I feel I should have started this self-assessment process sooner—but really was unable to. Sincerely don't think that the students could have handled it any sooner."

At the end of week eight, I distributed new self-evaluation sheets to the class (see appendix, form 6, page 90). These were more specific than the mid-term forms as I asked for more detailed answers. The SIT favorites were all there: "What did you learn this week?" "How did you learn it?" "How do you know you learned it?" etc. In addition to these questions I asked the students to rate their understanding of the structures we had covered in class that week. They were given a scale from 1—don't understand, unclear, to 4—have full understanding, can recognize and use easily. The students then had to list what they were basing their evaluation on—how did they know their assessment was valid? Also, if they had given themselves a rating of less than 4, what would they do to improve their understanding of the structure? Not wanting to neglect the area of employing new learning strategies, I asked the students to list what new strategy they would try the following week.

My teacher assessment for grammar class was positive because I felt I had gotten the students back on track and made the move toward self-assessment. My writing class, however, was not as encouraging. From my self-assessment journal: "I guess we're going to struggle to the very end. It (classroom atmosphere) is a bit more relaxing, but it is not productive. I'm not happy with myself in the sense that I feel detached. Most of the

students will do anything but write, and I'm not sure why. I just read through my final project from the Teaching and Learning the Written Language course at SIT. I feel like such a hypocrite—I haven't been able to accomplish much of what I said I would in my writing class. Granted, a significant reason is the structure of the CIELS course, but we (the writing class) started off on the wrong foot and I have been unable to get us on a more pleasant track."

Week Nine

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *have more patience with myself and students in grammar*
- *allow students to struggle a bit with discovery sheets (learning takes effort!)*
- *don't give in to end of the session energy lags*
- *work on synthesizing*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *get students to take more responsibility for their learning*
- *continue individual work with inductive learning—discovery sheets*

Basically, in week nine I hoped to continue the work I began in week eight. The tasks and the focus were the same: do more discovery sheets, more individual tasks, continue with self-evaluation. We had done so much talking about learning strategies that I was anxious to see some action. I challenged the students on this. I had made copies of the strategies they said they would employ during the week (from their self-assessment forms of week eight). There were some wonderful ideas: "I would like to be given a few minutes to illustrate/teach the covered topic to class." "Each student should write down the answer for homework and explain the answer." "More free practice, students write sentences and classmates correct." Not everyone listed new strategies. Some decided to stick with old ones. I asked these students why they had chosen not to try something new, but didn't force anything from them. My responsibility was to increase awareness and

offer options, but if students were to be responsible for their learning then they were the ones who had to make the choices. (Hence the title "Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks (if they choose).")

In an effort to inspire or encourage the students to test their strategies, I copied each idea on a slip of paper and taped it, face up, on the author's desk. I also afforded appropriate opportunities for the students to use their strategies. I purposely asked Ashfaque, who had wanted to teach, if he would explain a particular structure to the class. Several students had requested the opportunity to share or summarize their understanding of a topic with their classmates and were allowed to. This was great. The students were the ones who needed to synthesize the material, not me. Things were really starting to come together. Students were making choices about how they wanted to learn and following through with them. They were investing more of themselves in the lessons.

At the end of the week I gave the students another self-evaluation sheet (see appendix, form 7, page 93). This was almost identical to the previous one, except that I also asked them to list their reactions to the strategies they had tried in class.

Reflecting on week nine now (six weeks after the term), I feel more positive about what was happening. Being a bit removed, I am better able to identify the students' progress. In contrast, however, my self-assessment notes read: "I find it difficult to comment. I feel burned-out and detached. I did push them a bit with the discovery sheets. They worked OK individually. The students in writing class did produce more, but again, I feel detached, disinterested."

The energy and interest that had originally characterized the dialogue journals had decreased significantly. The entries were rather banal as compared to those in the earlier weeks. There was a pleasant surprise, though, when one student suddenly began submitting

his journal. Although his questions were fairly basic, and I felt he knew the answers already (about my family, state of origin), it seemed to be his way of trying to re-establish a positive bond between us.

Week Ten

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *don't let my detachment and lack of energy transfer to the students*
- *allow ample time for synthesizing and recycling material*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *synthesize and review material*

The class continued their work on building their confidence and challenging themselves individually. TOEFL fever was setting in again, and there were daily requests for practice tests. I felt we had arrived at a nice balance where both teacher and student needs were being met.

It was during this week that I began reflecting on everything that had happened in the term. From my teaching journal: "I've learned a great deal about the fourth level of personal competence. I don't think I have done much for my students in this area, but I've come to recognize how emotions affect my teaching. I shouldn't try to stifle them, that's just not healthy. I must recognize, process and strategize, work with them, not against them."

Week Eleven

TEACHER PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:
- *wrap-up the term/review*

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

• *comment on course goals and teacher performance*

The two days of classes that we had in week eleven were devoted to review. Students were in a panic about the final TOEFL. Some of them were terrified that they would forget everything. I felt drained but good about what we had done in the past ten weeks. I gave the students one last form to complete (see appendix, form 8, page 96). I purposely timed it so that they would fill it out after they had taken the TOEFL, but before they received their scores. I asked them questions about what they had learned about themselves as learners, if they had learned any new strategies, if they were better able to evaluate their learning, what they had contributed to class, and to what extent they had become more independent, self-reliant learners. They were also encouraged to write comments about my teaching.

Naturally, I was quite anxious to read their responses, responses which made it clear that I had titled my paper appropriately. It was quite evident who had put some thought into their responses and who hadn't. I think a few of them never saw any connection among all those questions about learning. Again, it was a matter of choice. As I had stated on the first day of class, I couldn't take the students anywhere that they didn't want to go. Some of the responses were quite exciting, of a sort that made me feel good about what I was teaching and why. These were the types of things that make me want to keep going back into the classroom:

> "The inspiration of self-reliance which you inspired on us was not only beneficial for grammar, but also for other subjects as well. Now I can say with confidence that I will depend on myself in the future."
>
> "I have realized that I can learn on my own with study and practice. The method of your teaching has provided me with this feeling."
>
> "In self-evaluation I will be shown the actual position of my learning because someone else cannot estimate what I have learned and what I want to learn."

"I have learned a lot from your class. A new thing which I have found here is 'hard-working' and doing things with the cooperation of classmates. Discussing the subject was very useful in understanding it."

"I am feeling that besides improving grammar, I have learnt about self-reliance. A sense of responsibility has also been improved by doing exercises of a different type."

"I have learned much in group discussion. This is the new way to learn. I will appply this method in the future."

Wow, it was over. I had made it through the most emotional teaching experience I have ever had. Overall, I learned a great deal about teaching/learning and about myself as a teacher. Many things had come full circle.

PART THREE: *REFLECTION AND SYNTHESIS*

My ten weeks in Pakistan made for quite an intense teaching experience. The high highs and low lows of the term left me drained. But I was also left with new questions and areas to explore in teaching and learning. The experience definitely had its rewards: I made a lot of progress as a teacher and feel that my students, for the most part, had a positive and challenging learning experience.

I feel much more comfortable writing this section of the paper having realized that it is not a "Conclusion" and therefore should not be labeled as such. I have not reached an end, but rather have arrived at, or discovered a new starting point. This chapter is a reflection on and synthesis of the issues raised in chapters one and two. It illustrates the deeper, fuller understandings of personal competence, self-assessment, and empowerment that I now possess and will bring into future teaching situations. If I were to write a similar paper based on my next teaching experience, this section would be my "Analysis" chapter.

Personal Competence

Most of these thoughts regarding personal competence are in retrospect. It is only now, through the process of reflecting on the experience and writing this paper, months after the second internship, that I have finally gained a solid understanding of personal competence. While teaching in Pakistan I was certainly aware of the concept, but I did not think that I could actually teach it. I could aim for it, watch for signs in students' behaviors and attitudes, but that was the extent of it—or so I thought.

The Students

On the first level of personal competence, the students did expand their list of

techniques for learning new pieces of language. Many of them commented on the usefulness of activities that were new to them such as matching games, review cards, and discussions with classmates.

The second level asks students to identify preferences and make choices regarding their learning. These aspects were addressed when students were asked to rate the week's activities for value and enjoyment and to indicate "which activities were the most/least helpful?" These aspects were also addressed when students were asked to identify or choose a learning strategy that they would use in the coming week. On a less formalized level, I frequently gave students options on how to work, whether it be individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The second level of personal competence also asks the students *why* they prefer one technique or strategy over another. I did not really push the students to answer that question. Sure, it was listed on feedback forms, and it came up occasionally in class, but it seems now that WHY developed into a rhetorical question.

Combining the awareness of preference and making choices with the ability to modify old techniques and adapt new ones defines the third level of personal competence. The hands-down winner of "favorite old technique" with my students was the controlled exercise, e.g., circle the apropriate pronoun, fill in the missing preposition, or switch all the verbs to the past tense. To the very end of the term, they continued to love those exercises. And who am I to pass judgement? Many a night I have spent doing exercises from a Spanish grammar book. (Well, not all that many.) It was exciting to see the students increase the value of these exercises by incorporating discussion into them. I mentioned earlier that in the first week of class, the students did a homework check that required them to explain their answers. Initially the students were quite resistant, but discussion with classmates turned into one of the most valuable activities of the term

(according to student feedback). In fact, in one of our last classes I did not allot enough time for students to discuss a review exercise and they seemed to feel cheated. Looking back, it is easy to see how the students functioned at the third level. But at the time I was not consciously addressing this area.

The fourth level entails an awareness of emotions when trying to learn. Once I mentioned the concept of the relationship between emotions and learning, saw eyeballs roll, and decided not to pursue the discussion further. I did raise the issue with a few students in some of the dialogue journals and at tea breaks, when appropriate. They were getting hit with so much new stuff that I didn't want to totally overwhelm them. In the future, however, I will make a more concerted effort for student response.

I believe that personal competence can be taught on a more conscious level, that students can be made aware of the concept and work on each of the four levels. I feel strongly that the skills students would learn could be transferred to their lives outside of the classroom. Developing skills and awareness of the four levels of personal competence is most definitely a means of empowerment.

The Teacher

It has been an interesting process to follow myself as a student of teaching through the four levels of personal competence. Using rods to elicit language, asking students to make observations about the language, and removing myself from the students' circle of chairs are some of the techniques I use in class. Preferences regarding teaching techniques that I have identified include techniques and/or activities that utilize student-generated material, thereby encouraging more student investment and participation. Why? Class is more fun; it's exciting to watch personalities emerge and a community develop when such activities are part of the classroom. I also believe that individual investment facilitates

learning. On the third level of personal competence, the students guide my actions. Their feedback tells me how to modify a technique so that it will be most beneficial for them. During our first feedback session the students expressed their preference for covering a structure in class first and then doing homework exercises. I changed the ordering, and in fact it did work better. Another example of how students helped me modify a technique/activity was when several students asked for the opportunity to summarize a lesson at the end of the period. It was great. I was looking for ways to synthesize the parts of a lesson and the students came up with the solution. On this third level it's essential that the teacher listen and respond to the students' needs.

It would be impossible to ignore the effect emotions had on this particular teaching experience. The critical incident of week seven was not the only source of strong emotions during the term. My writing class also filled that role quite well. I was frequently frustrated with the class and week after week I sought to answer what was happening and why. Examination of the class dynamics resulted in my identifying three students who tended to dominant the class in negative ways. They had set ideas of what was to happen in the classroom and used their social status and professional rank to intimidate the others from voicing opinions, sometimes to the extent of discouraging participation. I learned quickly that inflexibility and selfishness are two characteristics for which I have little tolerance. I had to take a step back and analyze the situation more carefully. Initially, I was tagging the whole class as resistant and uncooperative. Consequently, I would walk into the classroom prepared for a battle. The thought of writing class could turn my stomach. It was evident that emotions were interfering with my teaching by way of souring my attitude. Knowing about the fourth level of personal competence actively kept me on my toes. It was an awareness that led to action. I was

able to recognize various emotional factors and work towards improving class dynamics.

Over the course of this term I discovered that positive emotions can also interfere with teaching. I recognized this possibility with my grammar students. I enjoyed the class so much that I had to be careful not to interfere with the progress they were making in becoming independent learners. I had to let them struggle a bit, let them work for an answer and not to give them things too easily.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment skills are so important, so essential. They're what allow people to say "sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Why? Because an inner criterion has been developed, a sense of self-worth has been cultivated. Self-assessment skills foster confidence and security. They convince students that they do have knowledge. (Freire 1988). With those feelings as a base, a student is able to learn more because he/she can take risks and respond productively to feedback. It is an important type of awareness that fosters growth in many areas.

The Students

Initially I had envisoned students completing self-assessment forms every week starting with week one. It became quite evident quite quickly, however, that that would be a mistake. It was important that the students have successful experiences in the classroom and have a sense of learning before the process began. The students had to re-discover themselves as students and re-establish their identities in the classroom. That takes time.

The self-assessment forms I distributed for our mid-term student-teacher conferences gave the students their first oppportunity to evaluate their performance and behavior in our class. The combination of completing the form and then discussing it

seemed to better enable the students to comprehend and deal with the self-assessment forms in the later weeks of the term.

I believe a number of students developed stronger self-assessment skills as a result of the experience that we shared. It was exciting to watch the change in one student in particular, who was very resistant and very vocal the first few days of class. The following statements are from his student profile. Week one: "We don't know anything! The teacher should tell us what is right and what is wrong." Week two: "Are we improving?" And week three: "We are improving." I shared these comments with him during our mid-term conference. He was pleasantly surprised but recognized his change in attitude.

The Teacher

The work I did in self-assessment has helped my teaching a great deal. The weekly teacher-assessment log that I kept has taught me how to actively work on improving my teaching by providing me with a system that allows me to effectively evaluate my teaching. Working with the log, I developed skills that have enabled me to be a nonjudgemental observer of my teaching and of myself as teacher.

Prior to the start of the term, I had made a list of objectives for the ten week term. The weekly observations that I made in my assessment journal allowed me to experience small successes in that I could see myself actively improving in certain areas. The process was rewarding and encouraging . As a result, I gained a significant amount of confidence in my teaching. Being more secure in what I am doing and why I am doing it has enabled me to recognize various elements, strengths, and weaknesses in my classroom. Not only am I able to recognize these elements, but I am able to work through the cycle of experience, reflection, and action, in order to actively work on improving them. In the

past I might have said "Yes, I know I'm weak in that area." But now I know how to formulate strategies to improve in that particular area.

Setting weekly objectives and strategies and then evaluating the week was an invaluable tool. It was not just an experiment in that it is completed and I have some interesting notes about it. It is a system that I will continue to utilize in my teaching. Being a weekly assessment as opposed to daily makes the system workable for me. Keeping a detailed, daily record would prove to be too time-consuming and draining.

Empowerment

When I spoke of the concept of empowerment in the "Analysis" section of this paper I used the terms rebellions, radicals, and political activism (how they are often associated with Freire). I also mentioned the violent demonstration I had witnessed in Islamabad and how that incident provoked me to research this idea of empowerment. For me, the word "empowerment" connotes explosive, cathartic happenings of a front-page, bold-type variety.

During the span of time that this IPP has entailed, elections were held in Poland, the Berlin Wall came down, and revolutions took place in Czechoslovakia and Romania (front-page, bold-type happenings). It was impossible not to have been amazed and thrilled at those events.

I experienced similar feelings from an event that occurred in my grammar class. There was a very quiet student who, throughout the term, seemed uncomfortable, almost embarassed about giving feedback. Typically, his responses were "Yes, yes, everything is very good. My classmates always help. All activities are good. The teacher knows what is best." (Politely taking some funky looking hors d'oeuvre and softly saying "ooh, very

nice", the guest all the while waits for the hostess to turn around so he can wrap the goober in a napkin and casually dump it in the fern.) During one of our last classes, however, as the students were in the midst of a heated discussion over misplaced modifiers, this student confidently jumped in with a "Yes, but I don't agree. Look at this other example....." I know it would never make *Newsweek*, but that incident gave me a new appreciation for how empowerment develops.

The powerful feelings that were generated by that exchange in the classroom helped me to see that my awareness of empowerment has been heightened. As a result of my teaching experience in Pakistan, I have a sharper eye for the various levels at which empowerment manifests itself. People transforming *their* worlds, if not necessarily *the* world.

The Students

It is difficult to judge to what exact extent my students were empowered. Some of them did develop new learning strategies and seemed happy with them. There were several changes in attitudes and behavior exhibited in the classroom. Some students did gain confidence in themselves and took more responsibility for their learning. I don't know, however, if they will have the courage to employ what they learned in future learning situations. My hope is that they have a better definition of what they need to do in order to learn and can make informed choices in the future.

There was one student however, who I think did experience a sense of empowerment in our grammar class. During our mid-term conference he voiced a concern he had for some of the "other" students. He said that some of "these" students were uncomfortable giving the teacher suggestions as it was not part of their culture. He was concerned that when I asked for feedback some of "these" students did not respond as

honestly as they would like because they were uneasy with the task. Thus I should not assume that the students who did respond spoke for the entire class. My response was that I understood some students might be uncomfortable giving me suggestions, but unless they gave me feedback, written or oral, how was I to guess their feelings and thoughts? I tried to make it clear that I was sincere in wanting the students' input. I gave him examples of the feedback I had recieved and responded to in the class, emphasizing that I responded to all the comments, not just a select few. We talked of student responsibility and the making of choices in the classroom.

During the second half of the term I noticed that this student participated much more actively in class and made a significant number of suggestions and choices regarding class and his own learning. He seemed to gain a special confidence from going through the cycle of offering suggestions, having them put into action, and experiencing success with them. He took more pride in the type of contributions he was making to the class. Again, I can't say if he will apply this to future situations—in or out of the classroom—but in that small context of our classroom, he exhibited a type of empowerment.

The Teacher

I feel I did empower myself as a teacher and that my teaching has improved as a result. I made solid gains in the area of patience and setting more realistic goals. I now realize how closely being patient and being realistic are intertwined. The impatience I felt during the initial weeks of the term was a manifestation of my too ambitious, overzealous, and thus unrealistic expectations of the students. As I have stated previously, I think that self-assessment is a source of empowerment.

Strategies that helped empower me were keeping a self-assessment log along with a teaching journal, soliciting and responding to student feedback, and taking time to do

lots of reflection. I also had to take risks, accept mistakes as part of the learning process, and cultivate an honesty that stemmed from a sincere desire to improve my teaching.

Were My Goals Achieved?

Overall, I feel my goals for students and teacher were met. Those students who were flexible and open to new ways of learning did become more effective and independent learners—effective in the sense of being self-reliant (able to learn with or without a teacher), and more aware of factors that can affect learning. I base this judgement not only on student comments but on student performance and attitude in the classroom.

Not all of the students accepted the challenge I put before them. I'd say about one-third of the class just tried to humor me. They didn't actively resist, but did what I asked only on the surface level. They often copied answers from each other's forms. I told them I was aware of this, but didn't harp on it. It was always obvious who had given the questions about learning some thought and who was merely going through the motions. Again the issue of choice was important to me. The students had to decide for themselves what they would do in the classroom. I hoped that my students would become more effective learners, but only they could make that happen. My responsibility was to provide options and to create an environment where they had choices and felt secure enough to take risks in the classroom.

It is difficult however, to know where the line is, to know what is an option and what isn't. I did not offer the students a choice in my approach to teaching. I did not give them the lectures that, at the beginning, they so desperately wanted. Wanting a lecture was not a choice because it was the only way the students had ever been taught.

(How many people order the same dish at a restaurant time and time again, not so much because it is what they want as much as because it is what they know?) I now have a better sense, though, of how to make it easier for my students to make choices. I will address that issue in the following section.

Next Time... or "What have you learned, Dorothy?"

I have learned a tremendous amount through this experience of trying to help students become more effective learners and the writing of this IPP. I have learned that empowerment can happen in a variety of ways; I have come to realize that teaching personal competence is a means of empowerment and that I can teach it in the classroom. Most of what happened in my classroom in Pakistan was in the realm of personal competence. I just did not actively address it as such. In the future I will make the students aware of the concept about the second or third week of class and throughout the term take opportunities to point out relevant examples from each of the four levels.

Before the start of the term I foresaw the final chapter of this paper as being a recipe for empowering students, a "whatcha gotta do is..." type of thing. But what I have discovered is more a formula than a recipe in the sense that there are essential ingredients, but the exact measurements will differ according to the teaching situation and the students/teacher. The process will always follow the cycle of increasing awareness through analyzing, trying new things, reflecting, synthesizing, and applying the new knowledge. This means allowing the students to have options and providing them with opportunities to experiment. To make all of this happen, the following ingredients are essential:

1)—A well-defined, in that it is well-informed, starting point. It's important to know the students' situation, their cultural/educational backgrounds, their expectations of

the class and the teacher. While I knew this information on a theoretical level, I did not truly understand my students in Pakistan until I experienced their initial strong resistance. I was a bit too ambitious.

2)—Clear, comprehensible goals with an overall rationale that is shared. I would have helped my students more if I had shared my rationale with them. I too often did not do that until after an activity. In terms of security, knowing *why* is just as, if not more important, as knowing *what*.

3)—A secure, positive, low-stress environment. Getting students, especially adult students, to try new things in the classroom involves a lot of risk-taking on their part. A secure, low-stress environment faciltates the process. Ideally, the students see that they have nothing to lose but a tremendous amount to gain. In Pakistan, we struck the right balance of fun and productivity. Pakistanis have a wonderful sense of humor and eagerly seek to express it. But they take their learning very seriously and can get a bit tense about it. Having a variety of fun activities that the students were able to recognize as valuable helped establish a healthy atmosphere in the classroom.

4)—Honest, healthy communication among teacher and students. The importance of this is that it allows good feedback, "good" in that it is honest and constructive. Feedback guides my actions as teacher in the development of the class. It aids me in determining what paths to pursue.

This type of healthy communication can develop by providing students with a variety of ways, oral and written, to voice their opinions. The structure of the solicited feedback should also vary from very structured (as in the rating sheets where students list a number 1—5) to more open-ended ("what would you like to see happen in the second half of the course?") types of questions.

This type of healthy communication is interrelated with the secure, low-stress environment. Students feel more comfortable speaking and participating in a classroom where a pleasant, inviting atmosphere has been created. And when students realize their input is valued, they feel more secure and positive about the learning experience. If at any time a student thinks "Why are we doing this?", I hope that he/she feels comfortable asking me directly.

In the future I will take more opportunities to show students where they are in the process of becoming more effective learners and to point out when they make a suggestion, how it is implemented and what effect it has on their learning and/or the class. I will also provide the students with more examples of their past successes when trying new learning strategies. This is also part of teacher-student communication.

5)—Commitment on the teacher's part. I perhaps spent more time than was necessary on this process, one reason being that this really was a discovery term, and so I took enormous amounts of notes on students, their feedback, and what-if questions. I overdid a lot of things but felt it was necessary because this was unknown territory to me. But if a teacher wants to see that individual students are working on the process of becoming more effective learners, then it requires a significant amount of time. It would not be feasible for a teacher with a class of 25 or more students to keep all the information I did. But this doesn't mean the process shouldn't be attempted. A possible solution would be to have the students work in small groups, with representatives giving summaries of feedback. Or perhaps the students could be allotted time to discuss strategies, again in small groups while the teacher floats from group to group.

Teacher commitment to the process can make it or break it. The students won't give constructive comments if they feel they won't be pursued or considered seriously.

A Conclusion

This paper could be labeled wishy-washy for its lack of conclusive statements (and its overabundance of modals—could, might, may). But I actually have reached a conclusion: If I consciously teach personal competence, address all four levels in the classroom, then students can develop stronger self-assessment skills and become more effective learners. They will be empowered—if they choose.

AFTERWORD

Why rock the boat?

Laurie Emel, my supervisor at CIELS and my second reader, raised an important issue upon reading my first draft. "Why bother to upset their apple carts? If you change the students' classroom behavior and experiences through awareness and empowerment—and if you expect this to translate to their broader life experiences—then doesn't this fly in the face of what they believe, based on their culture and religion? Why rock the boat?"

These are powerful questions that each of us teachers must answer as individuals. Each teaching situation involves different factors that will affect the answers. Why are the students studying English? Are they going to an English-speaking country to live, work, or study? Have we as teachers carefully considered the implications of language teaching? Is this cultural imperialism?

Personally, I did not feel like a cultural imperialist because I was open to learning, and indeed I learned of many wonderful values and aspects of Muslim culture that I hope to share with Americans. Hospitality and shared responsibility in terms of health care, the elderly, and the poor are two such aspects. I also had great faith in my students' ability to make decisions and choices. Admittedly I, as a teacher, can have a strong influence on students, but I would not insult their intelligence by assuming that I am in control of their lives. I address my students as "subjects who know and act versus objects who are known and acted upon" (Freire 1988). I by no means assumed the air of the authority in the classroom; it was as much a learning experience for me as for my students. I strove for healthy dialogue and was open to having my apple cart upset. "The mark of a successful educator is not skill in persuasion—which is but an insidious form of

proaganda—but the ability to dialogue with educatees in a mode of reciprocity." (Goulet 1988, xiii).

But to address all of these questions thoroughly deserves another IPP. I will continue to address them no matter where I teach. I have answered the what and why of my teaching only for the present. These answers too will be constantly evolving, and new questions will arise.

One last note

It's easy to play the "what if..." game. "Well, what if the students don't respond to a particular activity?" "What if I try something that doesn't work?" "What if I inadvertently make a cultural faux pas?" The list goes on and on, leading to a dangerous cycle that can result in stagnation. Teaching can be risky stuff, but for me it's worth it.

> "Until one is comitted
> there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back,
> always ineffectiveness.
> Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation)
> there is one elementary truth,
> the ignorance of which kills countless ideas
> and splendid plans:
> that the moment one definitely commits oneself,
> the Providence moves too.
> All sorts of things occur to help one
> that would otherwise have never occurred.
> A whole stream of events issue from the decision,
> raising in ones's favor all manner
> of unforeseen incidents and meetings
> and material assistance,
> which no man could have dreamt
> would have come his way.
> I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:
> 'Whatever you can do, or dream you
> can...begin it.
> Boldness has genius, power and magic to
> it.'"
>
> —W. N. Murray
> The Scottish Himalayan Expedition, 1951

APPENDIX

The forms contained in the following appendix are the ones I used during my second internship in Pakistan. I have tried to include several students' responses for each form. I did not retain any copies of the students' "Description of Self as Learner" form as I had the information recorded in my student profile folder and had returned the students completed forms to them during the mid-term conferences. Neither do I have any copies of completed "Rate the Week's Activities" form. Therefore, I have substituted blank forms in both cases.

Form 1a

Name _____ Date _____

Increasing your awareness of yourself as a learner is an important first step to becoming a more effective learner. The purpose of this form is to help you define who you are as a learner, and what you need in order to learn. We will refer back to this form at the middle and end of the term to to if anything has changed.

Please answer these questions as honestly and thoughtfully as possible. Thank you!

Describe yourself as a learner. (What kind of student are you? or How do *you* learn something new?)

What are your strengths as a student?

What are your weaknesses?

What do you hope to gain from this class this term?

What areas do you want you want to work on this term?

How will you work on these areas?

What is your biggest concern about this class?

Form 1b

I think form 1a would be more effective if the questions were more focused. Also, when I use this type of form in the future, I will ask the students to focus on a specific learning experience. If students seem too removed from a learning experience (as might have been the case in Pakistan), I will consider waiting until about a third of the term is completed so that the students could use those initial weeks as a reference point. While more experimentation is needed on my part, Laurie Emel has offered the following as suggestions.

For *"What are your strengths as a student?":*

What are the best ways you learn? When you want to learn something, *how* do you do it? Describe your learning process (strategies/activities, ways of learning?)

For *"What are your weaknesses?":*

When you fail to learn, what are the reasons? What went wrong? Was there something about your strategy that was inappropriate? Is there anything about your way of learning that you would like to change?

For *"What areas do you want to work on this term?":*

"Areas" should be clarified. What does it mean?—specific grammar structures? kinds of activities—written, oral, group? ways of learning?

For *"How will you work on these areas?":*

Give students options to choose from, such as "group, individual, reflection, homework, demonstration."

For *"What is your biggest concern about this class?:*

Again, give the students options to choose from, such as "the subject area, my classmates, my weakness, the teacher."

Form 2

WEEKLY EVALUATION OF CLASS ACTIVITIES

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Please rate the week's activities for both their enjoyment and value. 1 is extremely low and 5 is extremely high. For example, you might feel that a particular activity was a lot of fun but don't think that it helped you learn anything new. In this case you may rate it "4" or "5" in enjoyment and "1" or "2" in value.

enjoyment	value	name of activity
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____
____	____	_____

Which activities were the most helpful? Why?

Which activities were the least helpful? Why?

Name _____ Form 3 72

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BY THURSDAY, AUGUST 3. Thank you for your cooperation.

When I sit down to study for a test I always do the following:

First, I get my self mentally prepared and arrange for an atmosphere for study

Then I I study the class notes, home work assignments and printed mat

To test my understanding of the subject I review and reconcile what one I have studied

In class what do you do that most helps your learning? To remain attentive to whatever is being taught.

What do your classmates do that helps your learning? Group Discussions

What does the teacher do that most helps your learning? When a due attention is given to my questions, and by systematic teaching.

What do you do in class that hinders your learning? By mentally not being present

What do your classmates do that hinders your learning? At a time when more than one classmate speaks to the teacher or otherwise.

What does the teacher do that hinders your learning? When teaching is not made in sequence.

How do you help your classmates in class? By making discussions and by guiding them where I can.

How do you hinder your classmates? I don't try to do so.

The best way to learn grammar is By group discussions; by systematic teaching, and if provided with printed material about various lessons

PLEASE TURN OVER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What is your reaction to all these questions and forms about learning? Are they helpful? too much work? I value your comments.

I think these forms are very valuable. More printed material would help the learning more.

Please feel free to continue

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name _____ 73

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BY THURSDAY, AUGUST 3. Thank you for your cooperation.

When I sit down to study for a test I always do the following:

First, I prepare myself mentally for test & then take answer sheet and other requirement for a test

Then I concentrate all my attention on concerned Subject

To test my understanding of the subject I First of all I read the sentence and choose the verb, Subject & object in the sentence and then choose the answer

In class what do you do that most helps your learning? Learning from teacher by delivering lecture, charts & printed material and also from classmate in group discussion.

What do your classmates do that helps your learning? Some of the classmates explain the meaning of certain words which we don't know and we learn from them in discussion.

What does the teacher do that most helps your learning? Teacher provides chart, lecture and group discussion in the class.

What do you do in class that hinders your learning? Sometime Absent minded in the class.

What do your classmates do that hinders your learning? Most of our classmates are very serious during class time, so during learning time they don't hinder the classmates in the class.

What does the teacher do that hinders your learning? Sometime the Teacher waste time in irrelevant discussion

How do you help your classmates in class? We guide and make correction in discussion

How do you hinder your classmates? We don't type friendly behavior with them

The best way to learn grammar is To study thoroughly grammar key rules & principles first.

PLEASE TURN OVER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

your reaction to all these questions and forms about learning? Are they helpful? too much work? I value your comments.

I think these forms I Possibly Study the quest. and Ans. We did the they are very helpful in evaluation of a class

Please feel free to continue

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name [illegible] and group

74

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BY THURSDAY, AUGUST 3. Thank you for your cooperation.

When I sit down to study for a test I always do the following:

First, I Concentrate to the topic

Then I out line the topics

To test my understanding of the subject I do the exercise.

In class what do you do that most helps your learning?

To listen the teachers lecture carefully and taking notes.

What do your classmates do that helps your learning?

mutual discussion.

What does the teacher do that most helps your learning?

By giving lectures, examples and written material

What do you do in class that hinders your learning?

I shut down the A.C.

What do your classmates do that hinders your learning?

When they talk irrelevantly

What does the teacher do that hinders your learning?

No hinderance from Teacher side

How do you help your classmates in class? By giving examples

How do you hinder your classmates? To my best extent, I avoid to cause any hinderance

The best way to learn grammar is to familier with rules and making exercise

PLEASE TURN OVER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What is your reaction to all these questions and forms about learning? Are they helpful? too much work? I value your comments.

I think these forms quite helpful

Please feel free to continue

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Helps my learning: listening to the teacher with concentration & taking notes... learning from T by delivering lecture, charts & printed materials ... to remain attentive to whatever is being taught... I mostly concentrate on the lecture... I try to give full concentration to what the T is talking about/asking about. I also try my best to answer the best... I listen carefully to whatever the teacher says, then if necessary I write it down... listen carefully & take notes... → understanding... thoroughly observing the teacher and trying to follow what is explained orally or written... listen to the teacher carefully and take notes... listen to the teacher carefully and take notes... give full attention to the teacher and take careful notes...

My classmates help my learning ... mutual discussion... some of the class explain the meaning of certain words which we don't know and we learn from them in discussion... group discussion... If I need it, they clear the doubts about some minor points. Also their discussion with others and myself help me to learn... when they discuss things that are relevant to the context, ask relevant questions of the T & his/her reply helps me to learn better... they help a lot when we repeat a sentence turn by turn, I make corrections of my sentences... mutual discussions... discussion, checking... discuss the problems and ask questions from each other & the teacher about the topic under consideration... When they discuss in groups, I learn better... When they discuss in groups, I learn better... When they ask relevant questions regarding the topic...

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teacher helps my learning ... giving exercises and written material... provides charts, lecture and group discussion... when due attention is given to my questions and by systematic teaching... when he/she explains with some examples... When the T explains the matter w/ supporting examples and then asks me to do the exercises for the relevant context + then allows class discussion... when she explains a thing, just as she explained noun, pronoun, verb, etc... by giving lectures, examples and written material... by solving any not understood problem... writes definitions, give examples, and asks us to solve the quiz-type questions. Homework is very useful... by giving lectures, examples, quizzes, exercises, and written material... by giving lectures, quizzes, exercises and written material... When she gives examples related to the topic and shows different pictures & maps it helps me to understand a lot

I hinder my learning when sometimes absent-minded in class... by mentally not being present... I sometimes divert my attention from the lecture for a while to relax my mind... when I lose my concentration... when I'm unattentive... nothing if feeling well... when I do not concentrate and am under tension... when I do not concentrate and am under tension...

Teacher hinders my learning she wastes time on irrelevant discussion... when teaching is not done in a sequence... not such a case in grammar, but when the teacher skips some topics and moves very quickly... sometimes an unconcerned [IRRELEVANT STORY]...

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My classmates hinder my learning when they talk irrelevantly... most of our classmates are very serious during class time, I mean during learning time, they do not hinder me in the class... When more than one classmate speaks... their useless discussions which are only to make their presence known... when one or more of my classmates takes a deviation by indulging in irrelevant questions and discussions... when they talk irrelevantly... irrelevant and unnecessary talk... nothing at all... when they start talking irrelevantly... when they start talking irrelevantly...

I hinder my classmates when I... I avoid causing any hindrance or disturbance to my classmates or... I brotherly and friendly handle them... I don't try to do so... I intentionally never hinder my classmates but sometimes my discussions with the teacher about points already clear to them perhaps bores them... I try my best not to make such gestures that hinder my classmates But a late entry on an occasion or two would hinder my classmates... If there is something I don't know, they may not go forward. Thus I hinder my classmates... To my best extent, I avoid causing any hindrance... by asking unnecessary help... I cannot imagine this... To my best extent, I avoid doing ~~do~~ any irrelevant cause... To my best extent, I avoid doing any irrelevant cause... Nil

The best way to learn grammar is by learning its rules and not doing exercises... to study thoroughly the key rules and principles is a must... by group discussions; by systematic teaching and being provided with printed material about various lessons... to concentrate and to be in touch with grammar. Exercises also help very much... doing the exercises and asking the teacher about problem areas and having class discussions... to do more exercises... to be familiar with rules and do exercises... read, listen and write correctly... to do homework honestly and practice whatever is taught. Above all one should confess his ignorance when he is ignorant of a problem... To acquaint myself. I learn by knowing and reading the key grammar rules... to learn the key rules ... to practice and to discuss with my classmates

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Class 4,

Can you believe that next week this term will be half over--already! I'm sure you know that there will be a mid-term TOEFL given on Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 pm. In addition to the TOEFL, other highlights of the week will include individual etings with all of your teachers. This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate your rogress, the course thus far, voice any issues or concerns regarding class, etc. In order to make your meeting with me as beneficial as possible I ask that you do a certain amount of thinking and analyzing of the last four weeks, and come prepared to share your insights. I will also share my observations of you as a student in grammar class. We will use this form as a guide for our conversation. Please complete it as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. Thank you. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you spend on these questionnares.

Judy

Below is a list of the grammar points we have covered in class thus far. Rate your understanding of each grammar point using the following scale:

1- very unclear; don't understand

2- can recognize it when the teacher or my classmates point it out to me.

3-can do controlled exercises easily but have some difficulty using it in speech and writing.

4- Have full understanding, can recognize and use easily.

Yes/no questions 4

WH- questions 3

Tag questions 4

Negative questions 4

Subject/verb agreement 3
(A number of students are
The number of students is...)

Prepositions:
of time 3
of direction 3
of place 3

Pronouns:
subject pronouns 4
object pronouns 3
possessive pron. 3
poss. adjectives 3
reflexive pron. 3

Gerunds:
gerunds as subjects 4
gerunds as objects 3

Infinitives:
Infinitives as subj. 3
Infinitives as obj 3

Verbs that are followed by gerunds or infinitives (I hope to see you. I enjoy swimming) 3

ED vs. ING participles 3
(amused vs. amusing)

Additional comments:

let me suggest that, if you please cover one or two grammar topics one day, first by explaining it to the class with many examples and asking the Students to give further examples as well as so called [illegible] activities may also be played

Home work may please be checked individually in order to Eradicate the mistakes if any

NOTE: Some of the categories listed on this form were modified from a student self-evaluation form used at the Purnell School in New Jersey.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please answer the following questions.

What do you do when a test or quiz is returned to you? I try to figure-out the mistakes, consulting the Azar book and ask for goudance from teacher

If you are having difficulty understanding a particular grammar point what do you do? In class I ask my teacher to elaborate the points just once; if still there's confusion, I say alright at its movement, because I don't want to waste the time. At home, I try to look after into the matter by consulting text books and other gauide material

Besides doing exercises, how can you get more practice using a grammar point? Just talking English with the class and with my teachers and by reading of English-newspapers, magzines etc

Are you trying any new strategies for learning grammar? yes.

What are they? Now, I am going to prepare a list of problems concerning English grammar, I shall bother ", my honourable teacher to help me out.

If you are not trying any new strategies, why not? /

Do you study the charts in the Azar book? Why/why not? Yes, but I am studying a little because after CIELS classes I could rarely find a laxed time

What would you like to see happen in the second half of the session? If we have covered all the previous grammar topics well Han, we will be able to understand the 2nd See

How can you make this happen? by having group-discussions in a Sustemic Way.

Please rate your behavior in class using the following scale:

1--poor 2--generally acceptable 3--generally good 4--consistently excellent

contributing to class discussions 4

participating in class activities 4

doing all the assigned homework 3

showing initiative 3

striving for improvement 4

in making positive contribution to class atmosphere 1

in listening attentively 3

in showing respect for/accepting opinic of classmates 4

in monitoring amount of time/relevance of own comments

letting classmates speak/answer withou interrupting 3

As for as the time limitation is concerned I really wish if I could do more since this is a golden opportunity for me to learn a better English as a language, but I am afraid I have not be able to budget the time after the classes is over. Really because instead I am looking my health

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please use this space to voice any concerns, comments, ideas, suggestions, etc. These can be about yourself, the class, your classmates, or the teacher.

Dear Class 4,

Can you believe that next week this term will be half over--already! I'm sure you know that there will be a mid-term TOEFL given on Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 pm. In addition to the TOEFL, other highlights of the week will include individual meetings with all of your teachers. This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate your progress, the course thus far, voice any issues or concerns regarding class, etc. In order to make your meeting with me as beneficial as possible I ask that you do a certain amount of thinking and analyzing of the last four weeks, and come prepared to share your insights. I will also share my observations of you as a student in grammar class. We will use this form as a guide for our conversation. Please complete it as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. Thank you. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you spend on these questionnares.

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4- Have full understanding, can recognize and use easily.

Yes/no questions 4

WH- questions 4

Tag questions 4

Negative questions 3

Subject/verb agreement 2
(A number of students are
The number of students is...)

Prepositions:
of time 3
of direction 3
of place 3

Pronouns:
subject pronouns 3
object pronouns 3
possessive pron. 4
poss. adjectives 3
reflexive pron. 3

Gerunds:
gerunds as subjects 3
gerunds as objects 3

Infinitives:
Infinitives as subj. 3
Infinitives as obj 3

Verbs that are followed by gerunds or infinitives (I hope to see you. I enjoy swimming) 3

ED vs. ING participles 3
(amused vs. amusing)

Additional comments:

I am satisfied about Teaching

Please use this space to voice any concerns, comments, ideas, suggestions, etc. These can be about yourself, the class, your classmates, or the teacher.

I will request to my Teacher to kindly prepare a chart of all miscellaneous lessons of the class.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Class 4,

Can you believe that next week this term will be half over--already! I'm sure you know that there will be a mid-term TOEFL given on Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 pm. In addition to the TOEFL, other highlights of the week will include individual meetings with all of your teachers. This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate your progress, the course thus far, voice any issues or concerns regarding class, etc. In order to make your meeting with me as beneficial as possible I ask that you do a certain amount of thinking and analyzing of the last four weeks, and come prepared to share your insights. I will also share my observations of you as a student in grammar class. We will use this form as a guide for our conversation. Please complete it as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. Thank you. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you spend on these questionnares.

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Yes/no questions 3

WH- questions 3

Tag questions 4

Negative questions 4

Subject/verb agreement 3
(A number of students are
The number of students is...)

Prepositions:
of time 3
of direction 3
of place 3

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subject pronouns 4
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possessive pron. 4
poss. adjectives 4
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Gerunds:
gerunds as subjects 3
gerunds as objects 3

Infinitives:
Infinitives as subj. 3
Infinitives as obj 3

Verbs that are followed by gerunds or infinitives (I hope to see you. I enjoy swimming) 4

ED vs. ING participles 4
(amused vs. amusing)

Additional comments:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please use this space to voice any concerns, comments, ideas, suggestions, etc.
These can be about yourself, the class, your classmates, or the teacher.

I have learnt many rules of Grammar
in the Class in short period. The teacher and
The teaching are excellent. ~~and teach~~
My classmates are very helpful to me
in discussion

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Form 5 86 5

Midterm Evaluation of Student's Grammar Progress

Student _____

Student's sefl-evaluation
Teacher Comments:

-during interview - said he will try to show more initative & use the language more

Teacher's Evaluation
Quantitative data:

Quizzes: 24/24 17/25 28/32 18/20 V+ ✓ 22 more 7/10

TOEFL: 23/40

Homework _____

Qualitative Data:

Attnedance V+ Punctuality V+

Attentiveness V+

Following instructions V+

Cooperation w/classmates V+

Ask him Active concern w/correcting errors _____

Willingness to adapt new learning strategies _____

Taking initiative _____

~~Overall observations~~

OBservations - seems sharp & intuitive about language

Didn't hand in rating of 1st week activities or learning strategies

→ Ask - WHY NOT

BIGGEST concern: To use correct sentences in daily life
→ how are you working on these?

Why was homework least helpful.

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Please rate your behavior in class using the following scale:

1--poor 2--generally acceptable 3--generally good 4--consistently excellent

contributing to class discussions 4

participating in class activities 4

doing all the assigned homework ? ✓

showing initiative 3

striving for improvement 3

in making positive contribution to class atmosphere 3+

in listening attentively ? 3+

in showing respect for/accepting opinion of classmates ?

in monitoring amount of time/relevance of own comments 4

letting classmates speak/answer without interrupting 3+

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Midterm Evaluation of Student's Grammar Progress

Student _____

Student's sefl-evaluation
Teacher Comments:

Teacher's Evaluation
Quantitative data:
Quizzes: 23/24 17/25 21/32 16/20 8/10 10/10 7/10
TOEFL: -missed
Homework _____

Qualitative Data:
Attnedance Missed because of family emergency Punctuality √+
Attentiveness √+
Following instuuctions √
Cooperation w/classmates √+
Active concern w/correcting errors _____
Willingness to adapt new learning strategies _____
Taking initiative _____

Overall observations

Seems to generally understand the mat'l covered in class. Playful, good-natured - likes to have fun in class

Ask - how he feels about his effort in class
- Is he being challenged?
- Are things too easy?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please rate your behavior in class using the following scale:

1--poor 2--generally acceptable 3--generally good 4--consistently excellent

contributing to class discussions 4

participating in class activities 4

doing all the assigned homework ?

showing initiative 4

striving for improvement ?

in making positive contribution to class atmosphere 4

in listening attentively 4

in showing respect for/accepting opinion of classmates 4

in monitoring amount of time/relevance of own comments 3-

letting classmates speak/answer without interrupting 3

→ sometimes gets off the topic

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name _____ Self-evaluation sheet #1 September 7, 1989

CIELS session 18 will be finished in just three weeks. Most likely, it will be several months, possibly a year, before you leave for the United States. Many of you will continue to study, albeit, independently--either for the GRE or to keep working on your language skills. It is important, then, to develop skills that will enable you to measure your progress effectively. These self-evaluation forms are designed to help you develop those skills. They ask you to analyze what you are learning and how you are learning.

Please complete this form as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. It is important that you complete it BEFORE class on Sunday. I will collect it at the beginning of the period. NOTE: I will use ~~these~~ form to help me write your final evaluation.

1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

For example: "I learned about adjective clauses." TOO GENERAL What did you learn about them?
BETTER: "I learned how to recognize an adjective clause from an adjective phrase."
"I finally learned the difference between who and whom."
NOTE: these can also be non-language related. For example "I learned that I get frustrated easily when I don't understand something." or "I learned a new way of studying."--What was it?

I have learned the adjective clause and adjective Phrase this weekend
What did you learn about them

2. How did you learn it? Once again, BE SPECIFIC.
TOO GENERAL: "I learned by concentrating." or "By doing exercises." --which exercises?
How did they help you?

what exactly did the teacher do?
From the Teacher and Consulting the Grammar at home. From the group discussion and doing exercise
How did group discussion help you to learn?

3. How do you know you learned it?

When I discuss with my classmates read the newspapers, books, magazines, listen to radio and see T.V. I know how I have learned How? - Do your classmates seek clarification from you?

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Name _____ Self-evaluation sheet #1 September 7, 1989

CIELS session 18 will be finished in just three weeks. Most likely, it will be several months, possibly a year, before you leave for the United States. Many of you will continue to study, albeit, independently--either for the GRE or to keep working on your language skills. It is important, then, to develop skills that will enable you to measure your progress effectively. These self-evaluation forms are designed to help you develop those skills. They ask you to analyze what you are learning and how you are learning.

Please complete this form as thoughtfully and honestly as possible. It is important that you complete it BEFORE class on Sunday. I will collect it at the beginning of the period. NOTE: I will use ~~these~~ form to help me write your final evaluation.

1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

For example "I learned about adjective clauses." TOO GENERAL What did you learn about the
BETTER: "I learned how to recognize an adjective clause from an adjective phrase."
"I finally learned the difference between who and whom."
NOTE: these can also be non-language related. For example "I learned that I get frustrated easily when I don't understand something." or "I learned a new way of studying."--What was it?

Adjective clause and adjective phrase were taught - this week and I understood

What exactly was taught?

What I taught maybe different than what you learned.
What did you learn about adj clauses + phrases?

2. How did you learn it? Once again, BE SPECIFIC.
TOO GENERAL: "I learned by concentrating." or "By doing exercises." --which exercises?
How did they help you?

From my teacher, and studying Grammar book at home. Group discussion and doing exercises assigned by the teacher.

How does group discussion help you to learn something?

3. How do you know you learned it?

I know it from my [illegible] with [illegible] reading book and news papers, listening to radio or watching T.V. How did listening to the radio help you to know you had learned adjective clauses?

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Name [redacted] Self-evaluation sheet #1 September 7, 1989

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1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

For example "I learned about adjective clauses." TOO GENERAL What did you learn about them?
BETTER: "I learned how to recognize an adjective clause from an adjective phrase."
"I finally learned the difference between who and whom."
NOTE: these can also be non-language related. For example "I learned that I get frustrated easily when I don't understand something." or "I learned a new way of studying."--What was it?

I learned that Adjective clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb which Adjective Phrase is a group of words that does not contain a subject and a verb.
who is used as subject Pronoun which whom as a object Pronoun.

2. How did you learn it? Once again, BE SPECIFIC.
TOO GENERAL: "I learned by concentrating." or "By doing exercises." --which exercises? How did they help you?

I learned both by concentration and by doing exercises. I From home work and second by doing exercises in the class room. They help me so, the I was confused about some thing my partner made it clear

nice, clear answer

3. How do you know you learned it?

Now I can distinguish between an adjective clause and adjective phrase while before this I did not understand it.

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Name _____ Form 7 93
Self-evaluation sheet #2 September 14, 1989

7

This form is similar to the one you completed last week. Before completing this one, read over what you wrote last week and any comments that I might have written. Give careful consideration to how you acted upon your strategy for learning this past week.

I will collect these at the beginning of class on Sunday. Because I have scheduled a practice TOEFL for that day, it is essential that you have this completed BEFORE 10:30! Remember to concentrate on yourself, not what the class learned. "I" vs. "we"

1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

a. present [illegible] = present [illegible]

b. past [illegible] = past [illegible]

c. Usage of above tenses in different conditions

d. Misplaced modifiers

e. Static verbs

2. How did you learn it? Again, be specific.

I learned by making more examples of my own.

3. How do you know you learned it?

I learned it good by listening and understanding my teachers & fellow's examples and illustrations.

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Name _____ Self-evaluation sheet #2 September 14, 1989

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1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

2. How did you learn it? Again, be specific.

3. How do you know you learned it?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name _____ Self-evaluation sheet #2 September 14, 1989

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I will collect these at the beginning of class on Sunday. Because I have scheduled a practice TOEFL for that day, it is essential that you have this completed BEFORE 10:30! Remember to concentrate on yourself, not what the class learned. "I" vs. "we"

1. What did you learn this week? BE SPECIFIC.

2. How did you learn it? Again, be specific.

3. How do you know you learned it?

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Dear [redacted],

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I'v enjoyed teaching you these past ten weeks. I strongly feel that I learned as much from you and our experiences together, as you did from me. I thank you for your cooperation and flexibility in our approach to learning. I especially enjoyed the fun yet productive atmosphere in the class. I wish you all the best in your future studies and other life adventures.

Cordially,

Jerdy Sharkey

P.S. I swear that this is the last form I will ask you to complete for me. Your comments will help me in my efforts to improve my teaching. I know you are busy studying for the TOEFL, so I will not collect these until WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMLER 27th.

What have you learned about yourself as a learner? (It might be helpful to refer to the "Description of self as learner" form that you completed the first week of the term).

giving chance to take part in group discussion to overcome my [illegible] of [illegible] problems. Homework discussion quiz test and then discussed in class. The [illegible] method adopted for [illegible] the class [illegible] reference to an [illegible] ice breaking among the [illegible]

Have you learned any new ways of learning? New activities or strategies that you will use in the future? What were they?

class [illegible] cube method, giving chance to take [illegible] groupings of [illegible] assignments [illegible] the [illegible] in a class

Do you feel you are better able to evaluate yourself --- what you have learned and what you still must work on? Did the self-evaluation sheets help you? How?

Yes [illegible] one can [illegible] what I've learned and [illegible] that they have [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]

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Dear _ _____, September 21, 1989 97

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I'v enjoyed teaching you these past ten weeks. I strongly feel that I learned as much from you and our experiences together, as you did from me. I thank you for your cooperation and flexibility in our approach to learning. I especially enjoyed the fun yet productive atmosphere in the class. I wish you all the best in your future studies and other life adventures.

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Cordially,

Judy Shankey

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What have you learned about yourself as a learner? (It might be helpful to refer to the "Description of self as learner" form that you completed the first week of the term).

I have reabsed that I can learn at my own by self study and practice of the exercises. The method of your teaching has provided me this feeling

Have you learned any new ways of learning? New activities or strategies that you will use in the future? What were they?

Self study, Class discussion with colleagues, Regular Practice which I have learnt and would practice in future

Do you feel you are better able to evaluate yourself --- what you have learned and what you still must work on? Did the self-evaluation sheets help you? How?

Yes. I have learnt all the lotics/subjects taught/discussed in the class ie Question formation, Subject Verb Agreement, Countable, Uncountable, Articles, Modals, Adjective Clause, Adverbial Clauses, Verb Tense

I feel that I will still have to work on some items which could not be taught in the class, Passive Voice, Many/Count nouns, Comparatives/Superlatives, Subjunctives, embedded questions, negatives.

104 The self evaluation sheets have of course helped me a lot and have served a guideline for improvement

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Dear _____, September 21, 1989 99

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I'v enjoyed teaching you these past ten weeks. I strongly feel that I learned as much from you and our experiences together, as you did from me. I thank you for your cooperation and flexibility in our approach to learning. I especially enjoyed the fun yet productive atmosphere in the class. I wish you all the best in your future studies and other life adventures.

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What have you learned about yourself as a learner? (It might be helpful to refer to the "Description of self as learner" form that you completed the first week of the term).

I learned that I was very week in grammer and I should be self relient.

Have you learned any new ways of learning? New activities or strategies that you will use in the future? What were they?

Exercises were quite new for me, pesticularly the game exercises were quite beneficial

Do you feel you are better able to evaluate yourself --- what you have learned and what you still must work on? Did the self-evaluation sheets help you? How?

I have learned alot of grammer but still I feel that I have to work further on doing [illegible]

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Form 0

Teacher self-assessment. To be completed at the beginning of each week.

Date July 22, 1987

Objectives for the week:	Strategies:	In retrospect (later reflections/thoughts): please date comments.
- Be more patient (esp in Writing Class)	- allot more time for activities - don't keep looking at watch ≠ lesson plan. - Be more aware of what I'm saying ≠ doing	
- Est my presence in class in order to create ss securities in T	→ be firm with some ss respond don't react	→ 8/15 - have est presence & trust w/ss in class 4 - Not thru strong-arming. Feels good.
→ goes w/ #1, make sure everyone understand directions	get ss to paraphrase my directions	→ 8/6 be careful in the future some ss reacted negatively "this should not be a lesson in giving directions"
→ let them write stop talking about it	- be more aware of time make up (% talking % writing)	
7/24 - after classes Meet the ss where they are - Now this means teaching responsibility -BE EMPATHETIC		

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Form 10

Teacher self-assessment. To be completed at the end of each week.

Date 7/21/81

Comments on the week's objectives. How much progress was made? How? What worked/didn't work? What factors were involved?

Successes w/ patience: took a couple of steps back + realized I was expecting too much from Ss. Went back over some objectives (ie becoming indep learner, etc) asking Students to have patience

- kept checking in w/Ss on writing class
- → did much better in PATIENCE + RESPONDING, NOT REACTING
- did a bit better with directions - putting various steps on board - so Ss get visual + aural input

I felt much better at the end of this week than at the end of last week

Don't know how well I did in establishing myself. - Snapped at Mubarak which wasn't good.

Poked fun at T-S relations in writing, which I think was good

I think my wit is what gets me most respect - also what can get me into most trouble. Writing is still scary because of insecurity → I am having difficulty doing the assignments I'm asking of my students. Feel more honest w/Class I than Class II - I feel detached. Not the emotions of Classes I or IV

In retrospect:

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Form 9 (second example)

3

Teacher self-assessment. To be completed at the beginning of each week.

Date July 29, 1989

Objectives for the week:	Strategies:	In retrospect (later reflections/thoughts): please date comments.
Continue to work on patience try to really listen to what ss are saying	think, before speaking → Paraphrase ss comments	
Make more of an effort to reach quieter ss	→ talk to during breaks & esp seek them out in class	
Have real feedback sessions	- schedule for beginning of class	
Do better wrap-ups in grammar	- save five minutes to review charts done in class	

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Teacher self-assessment. To be completed at the end of each week.

Date Aug 6, 1989

Comments on the week's objectives. How much progress was made? How? What worked/didn't work? What factors were involved?

In retrospect:

Form 10

made progress in patience area - in Grammar → good feedback session I listed everyone's comments + didn't respond to them until the following day. - Good to allow time between the two. I need time to reflect + keep my tongue in check. Felt really good about feedback session

→ made more concerted effort to reach Illahi, Agha + Isthegag - that seemed to bring them into class more.

Writing down objectives + really helps me to work on those areas more consciously. I see them in writing several times a week. Especially good if I read them before going in to class.

Did not make much Progress in Grammer Wrap-ups. - Keep running out of time. - MUST MAKE TIME, because it's so important. Have asked ss to remind me to stop at 11:50 → hasn't worked yet (this could be a weird thing to ask them.)

- PATIENCE in ~~our~~ writing class still needed. I'm still acting a bit defensive - coming out of insecurity. (Though doing notebooks I felt better this week)

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Feedback received from students

Class Grammar Date July 31 89

Form 11

Students' comments, concerns, suggestions:

going alright... book should be free

6 ss said group discussions very helpful...

should start from beginning of Chapter

cube game is fun & good

charts are helpful

game playing is fun

things should be systematic

Explain the topic first & then proceed

Building Skills book is good. T needs to supply more written material

Should be ½ hr review at end of each class

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more reviews

Teacher's response or plan of action:

Keep using group discussions (yeah! – I can see their confidence building)

try occasionally along w/other games that allow ss to play w/any w/their friends

I do have a system, but obviously the ss don't see it. – Will discuss w/them in class how we go from H.W. to class to next day review

-supply what I can, but have to be careful about Copyright laws. spend time w/ss & Text book How to use it as a reference

→ discuss this more w/ss – daily quizzes / weekly reviews what do they want

Also must discuss their needs & how they perceived the review done on 7/30 – a test on what was covered in the first week

→ this could be where I plan to work on synthesizing mat'l at the end of a lesson. help ss to wrap things up

In retrospect

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